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# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY



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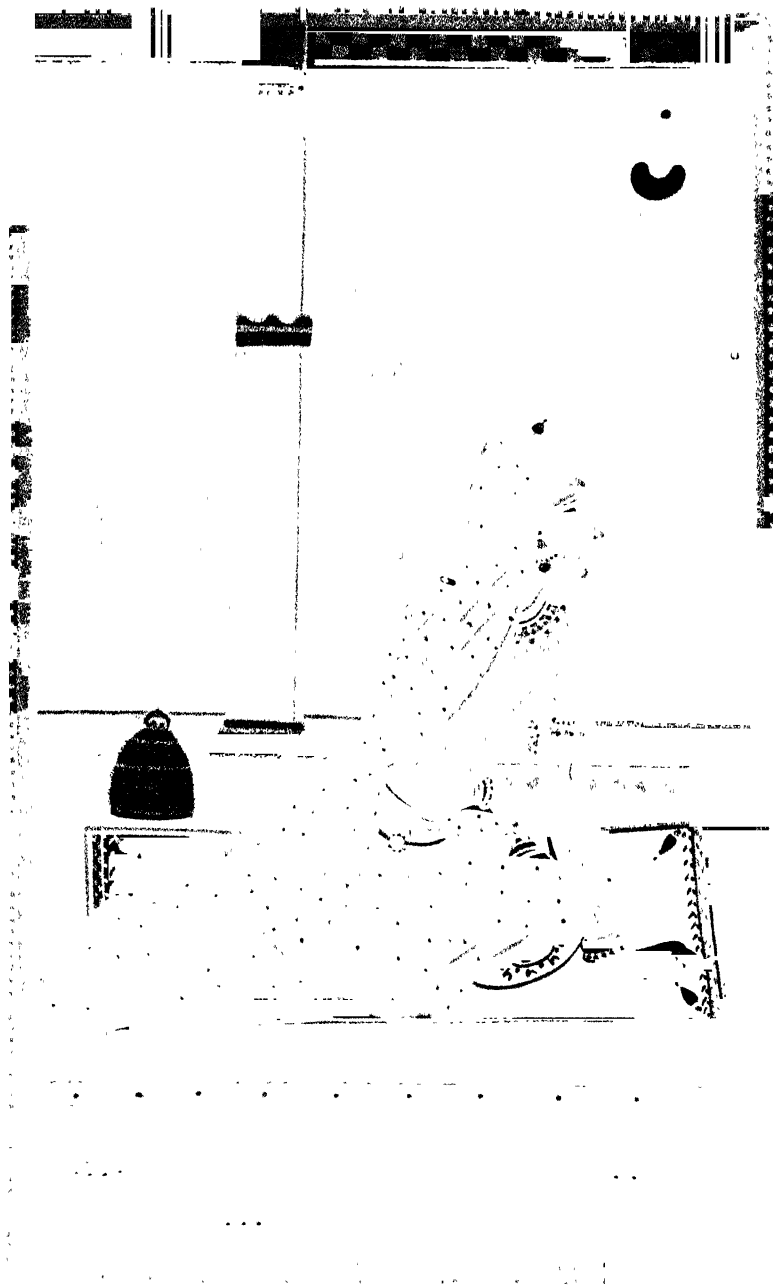
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Where the mind is without fear  
And the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken up  
into fragments by narrow interests; where  
words come out from the depth of truth;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms  
toward perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason  
has not lost its way  
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;  
Where the mind is led forward by thee  
into ever widening thought and action  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,  
let my country awake.

Robertson V. Gayle





*By Nandalal Bose*





# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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May

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## ADDRESS AT THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS\*

Rabindranath Tagore

FRIENDS,

When I was asked to address this distinguished gathering I was naturally reluctant, for I do not know if I can be called religious in the current sense of the term, not claiming as my possession any particular idea of God, authorised by some time-honoured institution. If, in spite of all this, I have accepted this honour, it is only out of respect to the memory of the great saint with whose centenary the present Parliament is associated. I venerate Paramahansa Dev because he, in an arid age of religious nihilism, proved the truth of our spiritual heritage by realising it, because the largeness of his spirit could comprehend seemingly antagonistic modes of *sadhana*, and because the simplicity of his soul shames for all time the pomp and pedantry of pontiffs and pundits.

I have nothing new to tell you, no esoteric truth to propound to you. (I am a mere poet, a lover of men and of creation. But since love gives a certain insight, I may perhaps claim to have sometimes caught the hushed voice of humanity and felt its suppressed longing for the Infinite. I hope I do not belong to those who, born in a prison-house, never have the good luck to know that it is a prison, who are blissfully unaware that the costliness of their furniture and profuseness of the provisions for their comfort act as invisible walls in a castle of vanity that not only rob them of their freedom but even of the desire for it.)

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\* Presidential Address delivered by Rabindranath Tagore at the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Parliament of Religions, Calcutta, March 1937.

The degree of this freedom is measured according to our realisation of the Infinite whether in the outer world, or in the inner life. In a narrow room we may have as much space as is necessary for living and for the exercise of our muscles ; the food may be more than sufficient, it may even be sumptuous ; yet our inborn craving for what we may call the more, the unattained, if not altogether killed, remains unsatisfied. We are deprived of the Infinite, which is freedom of range, both in the outer world as well as in the ceaseless variety of the world of our experience.

But a more profoundly intimate perception of the Infinite lies in that intensity of our consciousness, which we can only attain when we realise ultimate value in some ideal of perfection, when in the realisation of some fact of our life we become aware of an indefinable truth that immensely transcends it. We, in our human nature, have a hunger for *Bhuma*, for immensity, for something a great deal more than what we need immediately for the purposes of life. Men all through their history have been struggling to realise this truth according to the unfolding of their idea of the boundless, and have been gradually changing their methods and plans of existence, constantly meeting failures, but never owning final defeat.

We find that animals have their evolution along the line of the race. They have their individual life which ends with their death. But even in them there is a touch of the Infinite which urges them to outlive their own life in the life of the race, accepting sufferings and making sacrifices for its sake. The spirit of sacrifice in the parents is this touch of the Infinite,—the motive power which makes the race-life possible, which helps to develop those faculties in them that will enable their descendants to find better opportunity for food and shelter.

But in human beings has been further evolved a sense of the Infinite that goes far beyond the struggle for physical life which merely occupies extended time and extended space. Man has realised that the life of perfection is not merely a life of extension, but one which has its selfless enjoyment of the great and the beautiful.

After we have evolved this sense of the beautiful, of the good, of something that we call truth,—which is deeper and larger than any number of facts,—we have come into an altogether different atmosphere from that wherein the animals and trees have their existence. But we have come into this higher realm only very lately.

Ages and ages have passed, dominated by the life of what we

call the self, which is intent upon seeking food and shelter, and upon the perpetuation of the race. But there is a mysterious region waiting for its full recognition, which does not entirely acknowledge loyalty to physical claims. Its mystery constantly troubles us and we are not yet fully at ease in this region. We call it *spiritual*. That word is vague, only because we have not yet been able to realise its meaning completely.

We are groping in the dark, not yet clear in our idea of the ultimate meaning at the centre of this world. Nevertheless, through the dim light which reaches us across the barriers of our physical existence, we seem to have a stronger faith in this spiritual life than in the physical. For even those who do not believe in the truth which we cannot define, but call by the name of spirit,—even they are obliged to behave as though they did believe it to be true, or, at any rate, truer than the world which is evident to our senses. And so even they are often willing to accept death,—the termination of this physical life,—for the sake of the true, the good and the beautiful. This fact expresses man's deeper urge for freedom, for the liberation of his self in the realm of the limitless where he realises his relationship with the truth which relates him to the universe in a disinterested spirit of love.

When Buddha preached *maïtri*—the relationship of harmony—not only with human beings but with all creation, did he not have this truth in his mind that our treatment of the world is wrong when we treat it solely as a fact which can be known and used for our own personal needs? Did he not feel that the true meaning of creation can be understood only through love because it is an eternal expression of love which waits for its answer from our soul emancipated from the bondage of self? This emancipation cannot be negative in character, for love can never lead to negation. The perfect freedom is in a perfect harmony of relationship and not in a mere severance of bondage. Freedom has no content, and therefore no meaning, where it has nothing but itself. The soul's emancipation is in the fulfilment of its relation to the central truth of everything that there is, which is impossible to define because it comes at the end of all definitions.

The distinctive feature of materialism is the measurability of its outward expression, which is the same thing as the finiteness of its boundaries. And the disputes, civil and criminal, which have raged in the history of man, have mostly been over these same boundaries. To increase one's own bounds one has necessarily to encroach upon

those of others. So, because the pride of Power is the pride of Quantity, pride of the mere number of its recruits and victims, the most powerful telescope, when pointed in the direction of Power, fails to reveal the shore of peace across the sea of blood.

Such is the tragedy that so often besets our history when this love of power, which is really the love of self, domineers over the religious life of man, for then the only means by which man could hope to set his spirit free, itself becomes the worst enemy of that freedom. Of all fetters those that falsely assume spiritual designations are the most difficult to break, and of all dungeons the most terrible are those invisible ones where men's souls are imprisoned in self-delusion bred of vanity. For, the undisguised pursuit of self has safety in its openness, like filth exposed to the sun and air. But the self-magnification, with its consequent thwarting of the best in man, that goes on unashamed when religion deadens into sectarianism is a perverse form of worldliness under the mask of religion; it constricts the heart into narrowness much more effectively than the cult of the world based upon material interests can ever do.

Let me try to answer the question as to what this *Spirit* is, for the winning of which all the great religions were brought into being.

The evening sky is revealed to us in its serene aspect of beauty though we know that from the fiery whirlpools which are the stars, chaotic outbursts clash against one another in a conflict of implacable fury. But *Ishavasyam idam sarvam*,—over and through it all there is spread a mysterious spirit of harmony, constantly modulating rebellious elements into creative unity, evolving ineffable peace and beauty out of the incoherently battling combatants perpetually struggling to elbow out their neighbours into a turmoil of dissolution.

And this great harmony, this everlasting Yea—this is Truth, that bridges the dark abysses of time and space, reconciles contradictions, imparts perfect balance to the unstable. This all-pervading mystery is what we call spiritual in its essence. It is the human aspect of this truth which all great personalities have made their own in their lives and have offered to their fellow-beings in the name of various religions as means of peace and goodwill,—as vehicles of beauty in behaviour, heroism in character, noble aspiration and achievement in all great civilisations.

But when these very religions travel far from their sacred sources, they lose their original dynamic vigour, and degenerate into the arro-

gance of piety, into an utter emptiness crammed with irrational habits and mechanical practices, then is their spiritual inspiration befogged in the turbidity of sectarianism, then do they become the most obstinate obstruction that darkens our vision of human unity, piling up out of their accretions and refuse deadweights of unreason across our path of progress,—till at length civilised life is compelled to free its education from the stifling coils of religious creeds. || Such fratricidal aberrations, in the guise of spiritual excellence, have brought upon the name of God, whom they profess to glorify, uglier discredit than honest and defiant atheism could ever have done. \

• The reason is, because sectarianism, like some voracious parasite, feeds upon the religion whose colour it assumes, exhausting it so that it knows not when its spirit is sucked dry. It utilises the dead skin for its habitation, as a stronghold for its unholy instinct of fight, its pious vain-gloriousness, fiercely contemptuous of its neighbours' articles of faith. \

• Sectarian votaries of a particular religion, when taken to task for the iniquitous dealings with their brethren which so deeply injure and insult humanity, immediately try to divert attention by glibly quoting noble texts from their own scriptures which preach love, justice, righteousness, and the divinity immanent in Man,—ludicrously unconscious of the fact that those constitute the most damaging incrimination of their usual attitude of mind. In taking up the guardianship of their religion they allow, on the one hand, physical materialism to invade it by falsely giving eternal value to external practices, often of primitive origin, and moral materialism on the other, by invoking sacred sanction for their forms of worship within the rigid enclosure of special privileges founded upon accident of birth, or conformity, irrespective of moral justification. Such debasement does not belong to any particular religion, but more or less to all religions, the records of whose impious activities are written in brothers' blood, and sealed with the indignities heaped upon them.

• All through the course of human history it has become tragically evident that religions, whose mission is liberation of soul, have in some form or other ever been instrumental in shackling freedom of mind and even moral rights. \ The 'desecration of truth in unworthy hands,—the truth which was meant to raise humanity morally and materially out of the dusky region of animality, is moreover followed by condign punishment, and thus we find that religious perversity is causing more blindness of reason and deadness of moral sensibility

than any other deficiency in our education } just as, the truth represented by science, when used for ignoble traffic, threatens us with annihilation. } It has been the saddest experience of man to witness such violation of the highest products of civilisation, to find the guardians of religion blessing the mailed fist of temporal power in its campaign of wholesale massacre and consolidation of slavery, and science joining hands with the same relentless power in its murderous career of exploitation. }

When we come to believe that we are in possession of our God because we belong to some particular sect, it gives us a complete sense of comfort to feel that God is no longer needed, except for breaking with the greater unction the skulls of people whose idea of God, fortunately or unfortunately, differs from our own in theoretical details. } Having thus made provision for our God in some shadow-land of creed, we feel free to reserve all the space in the world of reality for ourselves,—ridding it of the wonder of the Infinite, making it as trivial as our own household furniture. Such unmitigated vulgarity only becomes possible when we have no doubt in our minds that we believe in God while our life ignores Him. }

{ The pious man of sect is proud because he is confident of his right of possession of God. The man of devotion is meek because he is conscious of God's right of love over his life and soul. } The object of our possession needs must become smaller than ourselves and, without acknowledging it in so many words, the bigoted sectarian nurses the implicit belief that God can be kept secured for himself and his fellows in a cage which is of their own make. } In a similar manner the primitive races of men believe that their ceremonials have a magic influence upon their deities.

Thus every religion that begins as a liberating agency ends as a vast prison-house. Built on the renunciation of its founder, it becomes a possessive institution in the hands of its priests, and claiming to be universal, becomes an active centre of schism and strife. } Like a sluggish stream the spirit of man is choked by rotting weeds and is divided into shallow slimy pools that are active only in releasing deadly mists of stupefaction. This mechanical spirit of tradition is essentially materialistic, it is blindly pious but not spiritual, obsessed by phantoms of unreason that haunt feeble minds with their ghastly mimicry of religion. } This happens not only to mediocre individuals who hug the fetters that keep them irresponsible or craving for lurid unrealities, but to generations of insipid races that have lost all

emphasis of significance in themselves, having missed their present in their ghostly past !

Great souls, like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, have a comprehensive vision of Truth, they have the power to grasp the significance of each different form of the Reality that is one in all,—but the masses of believers are unable to reconcile the conflict of codes and commands. Their timid and shrunken imagination, instead of being liberated by the vision of the Infinite in religion, is held captive in bigotry and is tortured and exploited by priests and fanatics for uses hardly anticipated by those who originally received it.

Unfortunately, great teachers most often are surrounded by persons whose minds, lacking transparency of atmosphere, obscure and distort the ideas originating from the higher source. They feel a smug satisfaction when the picture of their master which they offer shows features made somewhat in the pattern of their own personality. Consciously and unconsciously they reshape profound messages of wisdom in the mould of their own tortuous understanding, carefully modifying them into conventional platitudes in which they themselves find comfort, and which satisfy the habit-ridden mentality of their own community. Lacking the sensitiveness of mind which is necessary for the enjoyment of truth in its unadulterated purity they exaggerate it in an attempt at megalomaniac enlargement according to their own insensate standard, which is as absurdly needless for its real appraisal as it is derogatory to the dignity of its original messengers. The history of great men, because of their very greatness, ever runs the risk of being projected on to a wrong background of memory where it gets mixed up with elements that are crudely customary and therefore inertly accepted by the multitude.

I say to you : if you are really lovers of Truth, then dare to seek it in its fullness, in all the infinite beauty of its majesty, but never be content to treasure up its vain symbols in miserly seclusion within the stony walls of conventions. Let us revere the great souls in the sublime simplicity of their spiritual altitude which is common to them all, where they meet in universal aspiration to set the spirit of man free from the bondage of his own individual ego, and of the ego of his race and of his creed ; but in that lowland of traditions, where religions challenge and refute each other's claims and dogmas, there a wise man must pass them by in doubt and dismay.

I do not mean to advocate a common church for mankind, a universal pattern to which every act of worship and aspiration must conform.



The arrogant spirit of sectarianism which so often uses either active or passive, violent or subtle, methods of persecution, on the least provocation or without any, has to be reminded of the fact that religion, like poetry, is not a mere idea,—it is expression. The self-expression of God is in the variedness of creation ; and our attitude towards the Infinite must in its expression also have a variedness of individuality, ceaseless and unending. When a religion develops the ambition of imposing its doctrine on all mankind, it degrades itself into a tyranny and becomes a form of imperialism. That is why we find a ruthless method of fascism in religious matters prevailing in most parts of the world, trampling flat the expansion of the spirit of man under its insensitive heels. 1

The attempt to make the one religion which is their own, dominate all time and space, comes naturally to men addicted to sectarianism. This makes it offensive to them to be told that God is generous in His distribution of Love, and His means of communication with men have not been restricted to a blind lane abruptly stopping at one narrow point of history. If humanity ever happens to be overwhelmed with the universal flood of a bigoted exclusiveness, then God will have to make provision for another Noah's Ark to save His creatures from the catastrophe of spiritual desolation.

What I plead for is a living recognition of the neglected truth that the reality of religion has its basis in the truth of Man's nature in its most intense and universal need and so must constantly be tested by it. Where it frustrates that need, and outrages its reason, it repudiates its own justification.

Let me conclude with a few lines from the great mystic poet of mediæval India, Kabir, whom I regard as one of the greatest spiritual geniuses of our land :

1 The jewel is lost in the mud,  
     and all are seeking for it ;  
 some look for it in the east, and some in the west ;  
     some in the water and some amongst stones.  
 But the servant Kabir has appraised it at its true value,  
     and has wrapped it with care  
     in a corner of the mantle of his own heart. 1

## SIGNIFICANT MEMORIES\*

Count Hermann Keyserling †

HOWEVER rich my life may seem to be from an external point of view, I cannot narrate it, because facts as such do not interest me ; what is of interest to me is only the significance of events. Let it then be permitted as an exception to that among the Keyserlings who is acknowledged as a philosopher, to give symbols and not images. My choice of these symbols will then be determined by the question which symbols could be or should be significant for the future generations.

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My memory goes back pretty clearly to the second year of my life. It is thus full of meaning when I say that up to my eighth year I lived consciously in the midst of a feudal system, such as had disappeared from the rest of Europe for several centuries. At that time all grown-up men, among the nobility of my class in Livonia or Estonia whom I knew, had to render "government service". This, however, in the spirit of complete inner independence and autonomy. The motto of those gentlemen was not "Serve, not gain", out of which a German philosopher after 1918 wanted to create a new order, but it was "Neither awe nor gain, but give", "To do more than can even be repaid for the sake of one's own dignity". Thus replied my grandfather Alexander Keyserling once to his schoolmate Bismarck, as he

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\* This is an English translation by Dr. S. K. Maatra, Professor, Benares Hindu University, of the author's original German article.

† This essay is my contribution in 1937 to a book of memories which will be written and published, for the benefit of the Keyserling family, by bearers of that name over fifty years of age. All these men have lived rather extraordinary lives. Most of them still show some of those family characteristics which were transmitted from father to son almost without an exception from 1650 onwards until now. One Keyserling was the greatest promoter of the musician, Johann Sebastian Bach, originally the famous Goldberg-Suiten were composed as a sleeping draught for Carl Hermann Keyserling who, like me, suffered from insomnia. It was as a tutor in the Keyserling family which was interested in philosophy, that Kant wrote his "Theory of the Heavens". Dietrich Keyserling was Frederick the Great's most intelligent and influential friend. Of my grandfather Alexander, Bismarck used to say that he was the one man whose judgment he was afraid of. I have tried to condense in this short essay those memories of mine which have meant most for my own development and could help other and younger Keyserlings in theirs.—Author,

accosted an insignificant-looking man whom they met while walking, and when Bismarck asked who the man was he said "My tailor". And as the future Iron Chancellor looked amazed, he said, "I cannot allow myself to be beaten in politeness by a tailor." With us, latest in Europe, was this imperative of absolute generosity a norm for the nobleman. To this generosity, there belonged, as a correlative, the implicit prohibition of all action which engaged the inner man for material gain and which led to the loss of inner independence. In both these respects, my grandfather, with whom I lived very closely up to my twelfth year, when he died, and who mixed very freely with us children, was a very good example of this characteristic virtue, thanks to his deep irony and biting sarcasm. In his days, government service was not at all paid ; even out-of-pocket expenses were not paid. He who did not have much private future was even worse off when he held high office ; thus my grandfather replied to somebody who wanted to suggest that he should build a more luxurious house when he obtained the position of the Premier Knight : "A Premier Knight is not a cook." His successor to this highest position in Estonian Knighthood, who was all through his life very well-to-do, got himself reimbursed for the amounts he had to spend in maintaining his position. This enraged my grandfather, and he demanded it should be stated in the protocol ( whether it was actually done or not, I do not know ) that "Baron X as the Premier Knight allowed himself to be given a tip." Alexander Keyserling never concealed his convictions. When he was the curator of the Dorpat University, there began the first, at that time quite timid, encroachment of Russia upon our Baltic life. One day came the order that the curator should go on the Emperor's birthday not to the Protestant but to the orthodox Greek Church. My grandfather refused to do so. Then Tsar Alexander II, who had great regard for him personally, told him that he should not have any difficulties in this matter, for it was a purely political order. My grandfather immediately wrote to the following effect : "Your Majesty's order has astounded me. If a prayer for the Tsar is to be a political and not a religious act, then logically a prayer for health is to be regarded as a medical, and one for rain as a meteorological act. Such a view is inconsistent with my scientific convictions, and therefore I resign hereby my curatorship." Since then he lived quietly as an independent nobleman at Rayküll and refused all allurements, although at one and the same time he was asked to accept the ministership of education, by Alexander II for Russia and by Bismarck for Prussia.

Alexander Keyserling was thus essentially self-determined and independent. And this noblest of all qualities has remained to the end as the most fundamental characteristic of the Baltic nobility. My father told me when I was twelve, "If any teacher dare to touch you, you must at once knock him down, no matter what the consequences may be." When the first Russian revolution laid waste Estonia and Livonia, razed Rayküll to the ground and burnt down the manor house of the Könno forest property, where I had spent my childhood ( this property represented, moreover, one of the most magnificent examples of forest culture that existed anywhere, thanks to its drainage—the lifework of my father), most of the property-owners fled to Pernau ( I stayed at that time in Sicily, far from my home ). Most determinedly my uncle, Alf Pilar von Pilchau, the elder brother of my mother, with his sons and some nephews, threw himself against the nomadic hordes before Pernau and drove them back. This uncle was the last active "land marshall" ( the Livonian equivalent for the Estonian "premier knight" ). Even to-day I rejoice to think of the incident which occurred when he received Tsar Nicholas II in the castle at Riga in 1910. The latter naturally expected servility. Alf Pilar, however, stood at the end of the reception room, resting upon his land-marshall staff, made the Tsar come near him and greeted him as one would greet a foreign guest, that is, on a footing of absolute equality. Thanks to the complete absence of any fear of man in him, he repeatedly opposed during the World-War the all-powerful Russian generals, who through reinforcements, evacuations, etc., wanted always to ruin anew our land. As, however, after the return of the German troops from the Baltic, everything was lost, everything was over, he proudly contented himself with being manager of a foreign Holsteinian property. He did not, however, give up any of his inner qualities ; he remained to the last a perfect gentleman. When, however, after his return to his homeland, where he possessed a house in Pernau, he wanted to see his feudal home and his forest plantations which had been confiscated by the Estonians and which were so dear to him, he died of a broken heart.

The picture of the feudal system, given here by means of two illustrations was for me, in my years of growth, an environment which I took as a matter of course. I have myself never since had in my life any other self-consciousness. I could easily during the birth-pangs of Estonia have cut down the timber in my beautiful park in Rayküll and thus saved something more of my inheritance : but I did not care

for it. But naturally I went far away and began life anew in Germany at the age of forty, as life as a squire in the homeland became impossible. Speaking strictly theoretically, it would have been possible to save the Baltic land. Yet in 1916 I conferred with the later President of the Estonian republic ; so insecure were the Estonians at that time that they seemed to agree to a *Baltic* solution of the question of the then Russian Eastern Sea provinces ; that was my plan of "Belgianization".\* As there are no Belgians but only Flemings and Walloons, who, however, thanks to their extra-national inclusion in the framework of a higher synthesis, can live together in peace, so the thin German overlordship could be saved, if a Baltic and no national State arose out of the World-War. But at that time, when the realization of this plan could have been brought about, the majority of the Baltic people, who through oppression and persecution had become fanatically German-national, would not hear of it, and later naturally, the Estonians and Letts. I personally fought for this plan up to the year 1920 in the English press. This caused me to be arrested, as it was the same year when I for the first time returned to my homeland, and I was only saved from a long imprisonment by a joke. I had taken tea with the then State President, and as I returned home, I found my house surrounded by the police, who arrested me in the name of the Home Minister. I requested them to allow me to fetch a few things, which request was granted. On the way I met a friendly official to whom I said, "Please go immediately to the State President and tell him this and *nothing but* this: no word of protest or of complaint: it contradicts all usages of civilized society that when a State President invites a man to tea, the Home Minister arrests him. Count Keyserling thinks a young nation will acquire a place among the old ones, and so wants to do good to it if he can draw its attention to this fact." The result was that at about five next morning, I was literally turned out of the prison as a man is turned out of an inn who fails to pay his dues. When I think to-day of the decline of the Baltic people, I feel as if they wanted to go down in order to be reborn in Germanism. With the great statesmanship which we Balts had exhibited for one hundred years, it would not have been otherwise possible for the whole nobility to rest upon the one idea which in the Baltic lands could not possibly become a political idea

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\* "Belgianization" here means following the policy of the Belgians. What this policy is, the author explains in the next sentence.—Translator.

under the altered conditions of the new world that had arisen. But probably, the Baltic country was ripe for downfall. A conservator of forest of my Könno estate said to me after the first Russian Revolution, "If the old Count, your grandfather, had been alive, this revolution would never have occurred." There was something in this remark, not indeed in the causal, but in the symptomatic sense. Among those who experienced this downfall, there were very few of that calibre who represented the traditional ideas which were current up to the days of my childhood. Thus it was perhaps the right political insight which made the Balts see their welfare in absorption in the German Empire after seven hundred years of proud independence.

Yet if we Balts as Balts have a problem in Germany, it can only be this: to instil into her as much as possible of our spirit of leadership. It is precisely in this mass-age that inner independence and freedom counts as a necessary counterpoise. Ever since I settled in Germany, I have become more truly Baltic than I ever was, and I consider this my chief educational task with my sons, to instil into them, difficult as the conditions now are, the same spirit of leadership. It is, for instance, extremely false to say, as many do, that independence is "unpractical": on the contrary, it is only this which in such times counts. Since 1920 I have had to fight an unbroken series of fights, against opponents on principle, against enviers, haters, calumniators, fault-finders, slanderers. Ever since I publicly refused to see in America Emil Ludwig, who had accused my mother-in-law, Princess Herbert Bismarck, of forgery, the Jewish press has hounded me all over the world. From 1933 up to very recently, I had to defend myself against the National-socialists who did not understand me; the State of Hesse even took away once the citizenship rights of myself and my sons. Yet I am not in the least crestfallen. Always have I resisted all attacks with my spiritual weapons, and the final victory has always been mine. This I owe entirely to my Baltic spirit of leadership, in which atmosphere I was brought up.

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It has been given to very few men to be eye-witnesses of, and to have lived through, so many revolutions as it has been my fate to experience. I was even present at the Chinese and the first Spanish revolution. The revolutionary in all revolutions is always of the same type and finally equally uninteresting, just as a genius laid up with typhus is no more interesting than an ass suffering from the same

disease. Nevertheless, in the midst of the revolutionary confusion and rebuilding of the framework of a nation there appear, on the other hand, its best and strongest features more clearly than would otherwise have been the case. For this reason I have learnt a good deal from revolutionary times.

The Russian revolutions have first made evident to me the eternally unchanging existence of that evil underworld in man with which later my chief works, "South American Meditations" and "The Book of Personal Life"\* have dealt very fully. Only in the greatest and the noblest do I find some approach to true saintliness which I have come across among Russian women but never among Russian men ; Russia hitherto seems to be constituted to produce in fact only the ideal type of the saint, as on the other hand, she produces the unexampled Satanism of Russian business. The old China knew no nobility which a European could feel akin to his. Yet, on the other hand, I have not found in Europe any man who, in point of high culture, moral quality and aesthetic taste, can in any way be compared with those of the revolution-torn China. And I regard this as one of the greatest fortunes of my life that I had the opportunity of living for one month in close contact with such men. Perhaps what I mean here will be best illustrated by negative instances. I wondered why Ku Hung-Ming, the Chinese statesman and philosopher, who, thoroughly conversant with Western languages, had done so much for the true understanding of his nation by his books, had not commanded much respect among his countrymen of equal status. "Well," said a dignitary of the Imperial regime confidentially, "we feel that he *might* have been bought by Yuan Shi Kai." The significance of this remark lay in this, that Ku was never actually bought, yet there was the inherent possibility of it. This extreme nicety of distinction in everything, this self-evident life on a plane where spiritual possibility decides and there is no necessity for any demonstration, is a thing which I have never come across in any other world. Even the best type of the traditional Chinese people was thoroughly noble. But in a different sense from that of the Baltic nobleman. They represented the ideal of the sage, and not that of the hero. Hence a highest inner nobility which, however, never asserted itself by force. If we want to compare the Chinese nobleman at all with the European, then

\* The latter book exists so far only in German ; its introduction was published in the "Visva-Bharati Quarterly", Feb.—Apr. 1936.

we must go back to the ancient days of the later Greeks, when a Stoic could at the same time be an Epicurean. The greatest man of this type whom I knew personally was Shen-Chi-Pei, a learned man by profession, in whom really, according to the requirement of Confucius, profundity and dignity asserted themselves gracefully. He, however, did not believe it possible to do anything to preserve the ancient Chinese culture. World destiny cannot be controlled by man. He can only in and for himself be a measure and a means. Out of the force of truly preserved personal being, which does not need to express itself in any kind of action to be effective, and out of the ways of destiny of heaven and earth, there arises finally of itself the right.

For me this peculiarity of nobility has become the second guiding star in the formation of my character. But I have known only one man who in my view is truly worthy of reverence : he is neither Chinese nor a Balt, but the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore. In 1912 I first became acquainted with him in Calcutta. A year later, in London, I made him intimately acquainted with European music. In 1921 I twice organized meetings for him in Darmstadt. Since then I have not met him, although we have been always in touch with each other. In 1934, when he came to know indirectly that my life had become very hard, he sent me a picture painted by himself, under which was the following verse: "Faith is the bird which sings when the night is still dark." Above all, however, Tagore's picture and ideal were and are with me always present from the moment I came to know him. This man is indeed far greater than the world takes him to be. Racially he belongs to the noble Brahmanic caste of Bengal. Thanks to some lucky hereditary circumstances, his family has always produced eminent men since the twelfth or thirteenth century of our era. Rabindranath's grandfather was in his days the greatest nobleman of Bengal who held the personal title of Maharaja.\* His father was a true saint and an eminent religious reformer. Rabindranath writes poetry and composes songs at one and the same time and as one whole, with that self-evidence with which a flower blossoms. Once he said to us when he was in our Darmstadt home, "I cannot help it ; always, year in, year out, blossoms come out of me, as they do in our tropical flowering plants. But whilst with these, that which has once bloomed immediately afterwards withers, with

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\* This is not quite true. Rabindranath's grandfather had no title, but he was called Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, on account of his great wealth.—Translator.



me everything is preserved. That is perhaps something wrong." Rabindranath has truly created the Bengali nation with his songs and thus laid the foundation-stone for the future Indian Nation. Many of the songs which are sung all over the vast peninsula, have their origin in him. There are no closed doors in India : people come and go wherever a great man lives. If anybody hears that a new song composed by Tagore who mostly sits completely absorbed in himself, he communicates it at once to the whole people, for the memory of Indians is unerring. Personally, moreover, Tagore is one of the greatest noblemen, one of the truest aristocrats that I have ever seen. He has that distinction from all which makes a true king, the consciousness of the value of words of the aristocrat and the poet alike. Above all, however, Rabindranath embodies in himself more future and more distant future than any other known eminent man, not only the transition to the new, as Gandhi does in India, but future perfection. He combines in himself the East and the West. He is one of the few visible living representatives of that oecumenic man to whom ( see my book, *World in the Making* ), after the sufferings of the revolutionary period are over, all positive future belongs.

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On the Indian soil I became acquainted also with the most eminent woman I have ever met, namely, Annie Besant. She is generally known as the President of the Theosophical Society and the path-preparer of the "Messiah" Krishnamurti who has since resigned the Messiahship. But essentially she was something very different and very much more, namely, one of the greatest politically gifted women of all times. In my tribute on the occasion of her death. I expressed it in this way: Annie Besant was President of the Theosophical Society because she could not be Queen of England, or because she considered this position too small for herself. In her youth she founded truly the English labour movement—she was then the true driving, as well as rushing force of that circle to which, among others, Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb belonged. And for the self-understanding of India she has, in her last years, unnoticed, perhaps done more than Gandhi ; she possessed even the far greater genius of statesmanship. Some years ago the founder of graphology, Crépieux-Jamin, visited me. He had just published a "mirror of the Canailles". I said to him, "Why don't you publish, as a complement to this, a "mirror of noble souls"? "Where are to be found such souls," he replied. Then I brought the best handwritings in my

archive. Not one was noble in his eyes. Finally, I showed him those of Rabindranath Tagore and Annie Besant. The sentimental Frenchman said, with tears in his eyes: "That there are still such noble souls, makes my old days worth living. Tagore is quite as great as the greatest Renaissance figures. Such a noble woman's handwriting, however, as that of Annie Besant I have never seen." We had only met personally thrice, but there was mutual liking of each other's life. Annie Besant once had hard times, as she requested me to write to her a cheering, encouraging letter. To me, however, the mere thought, that she was living, was a blessing. Only very few men who were significant for me, I have often met; never, in any case, have I felt the need of meeting them frequently. The soul, indeed, lives on images, not facts, and a memory of the commonplace may often irrecoverably overlay much that is significant. Above all, however, the picture of a great man in his greatness which is present alone in the spirit, can do more for the inner growth than any intercourse, however intensive.

Moreover, I have seen very few really great women; I believe in my lifetime there have been very few of them. Cosima Wagner I knew well in my twenties; at one time she used to write to me almost every week long letters. But with all her gifts, the effect which she produced was ultimately artificial. What was significant in her was too closely mixed up with things that were willed and played, with what was essentially the life of an impresario. Consequently, Cosima could only "signify" very little for me; especially, I could never have the stuff for a Wagnerian in me. My life I have spent more with women than men, and I owe to them everything, more than to my acquaintances of my own sex, but all feminine perfection that I have come across is more typical than individual perfection—the former is in Romanic countries still frequently met with—and representatives of "Sturm und Drang", of which I have enough in myself, have never helped me. Perhaps I have come across very few great women, because those who could have developed into such had remained in this transition period in an embryonic state—whether in this feminine or any other form. In recent years, however, I have come in contact with one woman whose superlative eminence is beyond question, namely, the Argentinian, Victoria Ocampo. A wonderfully beautiful woman of great vitality, acute intelligence, fine aesthetic feeling, enormous power of work and great social position. Her picture has inspired many, very many views of "South American Meditations". In

South America there has arisen a new womanhood, based partly upon the traditional Spanish or Roman, and partly upon the positive acquisitions of North America and so far lying historically beyond the range of many European problems. There are earthly-heavy, elementary and extremely feminine beings, who are yet of the greatest spiritual receptivity and grandeur in personal bearing which, unfortunately, is getting rarer everyday in turmoil-ridden Europe. Some years ago I predicted an Iberian period in history as the successor of the present North American, and thereby drawn attention to the immense possibilities of South America : since the Spanish catastrophe, the realization of this prophecy seems to me certain. There is arising then a really new world and, indeed, an essentially human world, determined by soil and blood : the leaders in this new world, however, are women. There are many people whose women are in a typical sense more important than the men ; this is true in a high degree of South American people. Here I can only read the signs. But the experience of South America constitutes in all respects the most important experience of my whole life. There for the first time the soil element in man comes most into prominence. Besides, I have been able to work, as I have seldom done for anything else, for the awakening of a new culture. Not only could I work through books and speeches, but also through the press which used to send me daily its best interviewers who were far superior to European ones, so that I could speak everyday to millions ; nay, even through discourses in the streets I could talk to unknown people, a thing which naturally appealed most to me. The person, however, who has helped me most in all this is Victoria Ocampo who with her striking personality exercised great influence in the southern world, as very few women in the old world have been able to do.

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South America gave me, who had before only lived spiritually, as said before, the experience of the soil. But I was prepared for this experience by Spain in the European countries whose inhabitants are the most rooted to the soil. I have been there much, very much. Naturally, less as measured by time which signifies nothing to me, than as judged by intensity. And the peculiar deep humanity of these people has always impressed me, as nothing else has. This it could do in my case, because it is aristocratised. All that I have spoken of as the best of the Baltic nobility one meets with in another form in

Spain. There everybody is independent, everybody feels himself unconditioned. The opinion of other people counts for nothing, everybody lives with the full measure of his personality, and yet the social ties are stronger there than anywhere else in the North. Alfonso XIII had ultimately to yield, because he was too little aristocratic for a Spanish king. No friend did he trust, nothing he took really seriously, far less tragically. Lastly, he was a 'je m'en fiche' ( confounded ) Bourbon. This first revolution ( I mean of the year 1931 ) was carried out so humanly that one could almost regard it as a story. I was staying at that time in Majorca. An Argentinian said to me, laughingly, "Have you read the list of to-day's political speakers?" "No". "They are all monarchists and the reason of it is found in the following appeal to the republicans who have obtained power: "We have become hoarse by making too many speeches; we must now take rest. We have therefore so far asked the leaders of the other party to speak." For similar all-too-human reasons there occurred the Leftist movement of 1935. Yet in February of that year I was in Spain and had throughout the impression of witnessing a slowly but irresistibly marching Right. Thus the result of the election was very astonishing to me. I therefore sought the opinion of an old, clever Catalonian official. He replied, "The result is due to this, that the Leftists were clever enough to emphasise only one point in their programme, namely, the release of all prisoners. In this way they won the hearts of all women, and they all voted for the Left, while the men gossiped on the Plaza." In the same essential humanity is also to be sought the reason for the horrible things that are happening at the time when I write this ( September 1936 ). Everyman is naturally good *and* bad. Everybody in Spain is a *whole* man who lives his whole life and would rather die for his convictions than perpetuate a falsehood against himself. No one gives up his convictions, no one makes compromise, no one is false. One of the cleverest living Spanish women wrote to me in September 1936: "By a remarkable chance I have been saved from certain death. What is happening is a wonder. We all gave up our people as lost, they lacked all living interest in anything. And all at once there appeared the primitive force of the Moorish and the religious wars. It is, in spite of its horror, a sacred war." Yes, that it is. Personal conviction here stands *really* against personal conviction. Consequently, there is bound to be born in Spain, out of the horror of this age, once more something grand and illuminating.

In Spain I have found existing as a living force in an entire nation, what characterises—only in a colder Nordic form—the best of the Balts. Hence my deep inner connection with this people. I wish all Germans to realize most intimately the essence of the Spaniards, in its evil as well as in its good. Organization, however good, does not alone suffice. I hope that all younger and young Keyserlings will understand that only the principle of autonomy, of ultimate responsibility, of the unbending courage of conviction benefits man. Above all, however, that nobody has any right to the title of nobleman who lacks these essential qualities.

## THE NEXUS OF BEAUTY

( Chapter from *A Diary of the Five Elements* )\*

Rabindranath Tagore

THE rain-swollen river has overflowed the low-lying fields on either side, and our house-boat, in order to avoid the mid-stream current, is leisurely rustling its way over the half-submerged rice crops.

On the high bank, a little way off, there is a cluster of zinc-roofed cottages, and through topes of mango and jack-fruit and clumps of bamboo, behind a great Bo-tree with a masonry seat round its trunk, is seen a one-storied brick-built house, from which direction proceed the thin tones of a solitary *shahnai* pipe accompanied by a couple of drums.

The pipe, with its notes woefully out of tune, is playing the first part of a rural melody, cruelly repeating it over and over again, and at the end of each repetition the drums break out into a wild burst of unmerited outrage on the placid atmosphere.

Srotaswini thought some wedding must have been on over-night, and curiously leaned out of the window, her eager gaze scanning the wooded bank. I hailed the boatman of a dinghy moored close by, inquiring what the piping was for, and was told in reply that the local landlord was celebrating his *punyaha*. † Srotaswini was disappointed to learn that this *punyaha* has nothing to do with marriage, for she had been in hopes of catching a glimpse of some bashful, newly-wed maiden, clad in red bridal robes, being borne away by a gallant, sandal-paste-anoointed youth seated by her side, in a peacock-fronted palanquin, along the winding village path now and then coming into view through the leafy screen.

"*Punyaha*," I informed her, "means in the rural parlance of Bengal, some auspicious day of the new year fixed for the ceremony of the first collection of rent. The landlord's agent, dressed up for

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\* See footnote under article "Laughter" in Visva-Bharati Quarterly, Vol. II, Part II. New Series.

† A Sanskrit word literally meaning *holy day*.

the occasion, somewhat after the fashion of a bridegroom, sits in the decorated treasury room with an ornamental earthenware vessel in front of him, and into this the representative tenants, to the accompaniment of pipe and drum, put such instalment of the year's rent as they please, which again is accepted on trust without being counted. That is to say, on this auspicious day receiving and paying rent takes on the appearance, not of strict business, but of mutual pleasure, in which, on the one hand cupidity, on the other trepidation, find no place. The ceremony follows the example of the joyous offering of flowers made by the trees and shrubs to Spring, which are accepted without any intention of being hoarded up."

"After all," remarked Deepti, "it's nothing more or less than the collection of rent,—why then make all this music about it?"

"Do they not play music," put in Khiti, "when they lead the kid bedecked with flowers, to the sacrifice? This is a sacrificial rite in the worship of the Rent-goddess."

"You may look at it in that way," I protested, "but if some creature must be sacrificed, why slaughter it brutally? Is it not better to connect it with some higher idea?"

"Personally," replied Khiti, "I prefer that the expression should be in accord with the reality. To tack on a high idea to a low deed, cannot raise the deed, though it may debase the idea."

"The quality of an idea," I observed, "depends on the nature of the mind through which it passes. I'm looking on these brimming waters in one way, yonder fisherman in another,—if you like, in a more practical,—way. All the same, I'm not prepared to admit that my way is the least bit less real."

Samir came to my support. "There are people," he flung out, "who appraise reality according to its grossness,—for them, dust is more real than beauty, self-interest than affection, hunger than love!"

"And yet," I added, "in all ages these very people have made shift to ignore the grosser things. They cover up the dust, cry shame on selfishness, and try to keep hunger out of view. Dirt is the earliest effort of creation on earth, but are we therefore to regard it as the ultimate reality,—to dismiss as unreal the presiding goddess of our home whose constant preoccupation is to clear it away?"

"You are needlessly perturbed," smiled Khiti. "I was not out to lay a charge of dynamite under your homes! Would you mind keeping a little more cool while you tell me how that tuneless piping

over there is improving the world ! Clearly, no good is being done to the Art of Music."

"It's no more," Samir ventured to explain, "than a sounding of the key-note ; inviting a return to the rhythmical melody of the refrain after a whole year of false steps misguided by discordant clamour ; bringing back a rioting world, if only for the moment, under the sway of the Graces ; conjuring the peace of the home into the market-place, throwing on it the serene moonlight of affectionate relations to soften the jagged acerbities of its buying and selling. The world keeps on proclaiming *what is* at the top of its voice ; the melodious key-note of *what should be* is sounded, now and again, to set the pitch for toning down its strident shouting. Such is the function of this *punyatha* celebration."

"That," I continued, "applies to all festivals. Man tries to undo on special days the misdoings of his every-day life. Every day he earns for himself, on special days he spends for others. Every day his door is kept closed, on special days it is thrown open. Every day I am the master of my house, on special days I am the servant of all and sundry. These special festival days are auspicious days, days of rejoicing. They hold up a standard for the rest of the year to aspire to. Such days are adorned with gay flowers, lighted with crystal lamps, honoured with our brightest array. And the pipes that sound from the distance\* tell us that the festive music of such days strikes the true note,—all other days are out of tune. On these occasions we come to understand that we are here in this world for man to mingle with man in delightful amity, that because of our penury we are unable to do so every day of our life, and that the days on which we can rise to it are our red-letter days."

Samir proceeded:—"Of penury there is no end in the world. From that view-point our life appears terribly mean and sordid. For all the greatness of his soul, man has daily to fetch and carry for a few mouthfuls of food ; he cowers to the dust if he lacks covering for his nakedness. On the one hand, he believes himself to be immortal, eternal ; on the other, he is beside himself if he but mislays his snuff box. Because he needs must scramble and grind, bargain and hustle, for his very life, he is miserably ashamed, and so strives to hide away the ugliness of his crowded market places ; his soul seeks to cast its magic over the processes of getting and eating, investing them

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\* The band-stand is usually erected on high at some distance from the main gathering. Tr.



with beauty from within itself, in order to bring about a harmony between its extraneous needs and intrinsic greatness."

"Yes," I agreed, "that's what is proved by this *punyaha* music. One person owns the land, another has to pay a price for its use; and the ashamed human soul wants to illuminate with a beautiful idea the dryness of this contract, to bind the parties to it with ties of affection, to show that it is not really a bond, but a free and loving exchange. It wants, in a word, to make the heart the motive force in the exchange of commodities, to base the relation of landlord and tenant on an ideal. There's no natural connection between music and rent, the treasury room isn't the place for decorative display, but once human feeling is invited in, it's fitly heralded by music and escorted by beauty. These rural *shahnai* pipes do their little best to declare that the *punyaha* is truly the holy day, on which the lord and children of the soil meet in mutual good will. Thus does man's soul seek entry and secure a seat within the business office."

Srotaswini, who had been busy with her own thoughts, now joined in saying:—"It seems to me that in this way not only is the world-life made more beautiful, but its weight of sorrow is distinctly lightened. High and low there is, and perhaps must be so long as the world remains what it is; by bringing the two into affectionate intimacy the burden of weight is made easier to bear. The legs easily support the body to which they are attached, but feel the strain when they have to carry foreign bodies."

If Srotaswini, in an unguarded moment of enthusiasm, happens to turn a neat metaphor, she immediately shrinks back penitently, as if caught in evil doing—much more so than many who calmly appropriate another's as their own.

Vyom said:—"Whenever man has to admit defeat, he tries to gloss it over with the help of an idea, and that not only in the case of defeat inflicted on him by his fellow-man. When, in his early days on earth, he found himself unable to cope with flood or fire, when the mountain confronted him with its forbiddingly uplifted finger, and the sky from the height of its majesty sent now rain now thunderbolt, according to its irresistible whim; man hailed them as his gods,—otherwise he could never have established working relations with Nature where he was destined to make his home. Human beings were enabled to live in it with self respect only after they had filled it with their own emotions."

"Quite so," replied Kheti. "The soul of man has undoubtedly

managed to preserve some sort of dignity by a variety of such-like devices. When the king is tyrannical, and there's no way of getting out of his clutches, the subjects make of him a divinity in an attempt to hide their own humiliation. Since man is more powerful and so able to enforce his will, helpless woman sets him up as her earthly god to uplift her submission to his selfish demands with somewhat of honour. And I concede that if human creatures had not this faculty of covering up the shame of the real with the glamour of the ideal, they would have descended below the level of the beasts."

Srotaswini's tone took on a mournful shade as she replied : "It's surely not a case of self-delusion of helpless mankind. Do we not see the working of this same desire to establish intimacy even where *we* are the powerful party ? Why do our countrymen worship the cow as mother ? She, poor helpless creature, has none to take up her cause if ill-treated. We humans have all the power on our side, so is it not our very superiority that we thus try to hide ? Our soul is loath to have it appear that the benefits we get from the cow are extorted by force, merely because we are stronger and she is weaker ; and so it can justly relish the milk of this patient, all-suffering embodiment of maternity, only after regarding her as Mother. The soul's creative urge is never satisfied till it has entered into an ideal, a beautiful, relationship."

"You've said a big thing," commented Vyom with grave approval.

"Whatever have I done !" Murmured Srotaswini, relapsing into apologetic silence.

Vyom went on : "There's a lot more to be said about the creative urge of the soul which you've touched upon. As the spider spins out its web round itself as centre, so is the soul at the core of our being, busily radiating threads to draw everything around it into bonds of relationship ; converting dissimilar into similar, far into near, stranger into kindred ; ever building bridges between the self and not-self. The thing we call Beauty is this web of its own creation.

"—Beauty, I say, is the bridge between matter and spirit. Matter by itself is a mere lump of mass. Yet of it we make our food, with it we build our home, from it we also suffer blows. Had we looked on it as alien to ourselves, what would have been more foreign ? But it is the function of the soul to make friends, and it does so by entering into relations through beauty. As soon as material objects are felt to be beautiful, spirit permeates matter, matter in turn is

vivified by spirit, and the outcome is joy. This bridge-building is still at work, in which the poet finds his glory. He strengthens old ties and evolves new ones, making the inert world fit for the human soul to live in.

"——I've been, of course, using the word 'matter' in its ordinary sense. If I go on to expound what materiality means to me, I'm afraid the only sentient being left in the room will be myself."

Samir had not been paying much attention to Vyom's discourse. "Miss Srotaswini," he said, "has given us the illustration of the cow ; that's further borne out by many similar instances of emotional approach in our country. The other day I noticed a villager, with an empty kerosene-can on his head, dragging along his weary, sun-scorched body. When, on arriving at the riverside, he put down his vessel, and sprang into the cool, refreshing water with a rapturous cry of 'Mother !' it touched me deeply.

"——This glorious stream which, as it softly sings along its gleaming way, bountifully yields up the nectar of life and beauty from its bosom to both the banks,—what can be a truer adoration of it than this loving surrender of one's tired and tortured body to its comforting lap, calling it 'Mother' ? When the gifts of this deliciously fruitful earth, together with the homestead reared on it, which has sheltered us from birth and through generations, are accepted in living relations of affection, then indeed does our life become fertile and fulfilled in beauty and joy. Then is seen the thread of unity that runs through matter, vegetable, animal, and man,—not merely as a learned doctrine. For we knew it in the depth of our being before science and philosophy gave it a name ; our blood acknowledged it before pandits discoursed of it.

"——Because we have no word corresponding to "thanks" in our language some Westerners conclude that we of the East lack the feeling of gratitude. But my own experience is just the other way. We are only too eager to acknowledge obligations, not only to men, but to lower forms of life and material things as well. The people, among whom the warrior personifies his weapons, the student his books, the artisan his tools, for offering them due worship,—they cannot be dubbed ungrateful, for lack of a particular word."

"Yes, they can !" I interjected. "For as a people we've passed beyond the stage of gratitude. If we often accept services from one another without any sense of obligation, that's because we acknowledge the mutual claims of habitual relationships which leave no scope for

gratitude. Mendicant and alms-giver, servant and master, guest and host, all these have been brought amongst us into definite mutual relations in which no question of getting rid of obligation by mere offering of thanks, at all arises."

Vyom accepted my view, adding: "We're not even grateful to the gods in the Western sense. When the Englishman says "Thank God !" he implies that since his God has gone out of His way to do him a favour, it would be boorish to pass it by without acknowledgment. We cannot give thanks to our gods because we feel that would be slighting them by offering something too trivial. It would be like saying: 'You have done your duty, now let me finish with mine !'

"———Rather is there a constant element of unappeasement in all loving relationships, for there's no end to the demands of love. And the ungrateful importunity of love is far more precious than mere satisfaction of obligation. Ramprasad sings :

Nevermore will I call thee mother, Mother!

—Who hast so tormented and art still tormenting me.

The magnificence implicit in such "thankless" attitude can hardly be conveyed in any European language."

"As vastly mysterious," cried Khiti, roused at length into sarcasm, "must be the quality of your ingratitude towards the Englishman! You people have in turn rung the changes on the intimacy of our relations with Nature, whom the Westerner, you make out, treats as a stranger. It's all been, I'll take it, very finely expressed ; and, as for the depth of your ideas, I'm left in no doubt, for I haven't been able to get to the bottom of them. But let me ask you : Would this discussion have been possible but for your being brought up on Western literature ? Could anyone who doesn't know English, even follow it properly ?"

"No," I admitted, summing up, "—never ! And there's a reason for it. Our relations with Nature are like those of brother and sister, while the Englishman of sensibility regards her as a lover. We are brought up with Nature from infancy, so we fail to perceive her subtler charms, her ever-changeful moods, and live with her in close but unconscious affection. As for the cultured Englishman, he enters into her spirit from outside, preserving the separateness of his human individuality, wherefore when his eventual union with her takes place, it's so intimate, so ravishing. He courts her as a bride ; she unfolds her mysterious charms to win his heart. He begins by knowing her

as matter, but when, on the expansion of his spirit into its first youth, he looks on her afresh, the splendour of her soul is revealed to him. We have no discovery to make, because we have never doubted, never questioned. The spiritual significance of coming together is, therefore, much larger than that of simply being one from the beginning. But for initial Separation, there could not have been the beatitude of final Reunion.

“—— We call the Earth, the River, ‘Mother’ ; we worship the Banyan and the Bo-tree ; we personify stocks and stones ; but do we therefore come to a true spiritual realisation of our connection with them ? Rather do we materialise that which is spiritual. We give to spiritual truth some form of our own make, and ask of it material gifts and worldly benefits. But true spiritual relations have nothing to do with fear or favour,—they are of beauty and joy. When the manifold charm of our Ganges makes us glad, she is indeed spiritually realised as Mother ; but if we invest her with the shape or idea of a goddess and ask boons of her, that is only a sorry manifestation of illusion, of blind ignorance. Then is the divinity reduced to an idol.

“—— Mother Ganges ! I pray not to you for the good things of this world, or to gain merit for the next,—nor should I get them if I did. But may the divine vision of your beauty, at sunrise and sunset, in the light of the crescent moon, during the cloud-softened noontide of the rainy season, which has filled my soul from infancy to this day of my life,—may the ineffable joy of it, beyond all price, remain mine in this and all succeeding lives, for ever and ever. May it be vouchsafed to me to carry all the wealth of sweet ecstacy that I have treasured up in my soul, away with me from this world-life, gathered into one superb multi-petalled lotus-blossom ; and, if at last I meet my Beloved face to face, to fulfil my destiny by placing it as my offering into His hand.”



*By Rabindranath Tagore*



## CHINA AND INDIA\*

Rabindranath Tagore

THE most memorable fact of human history is that of a path-opening, not for the clearing of a passage for machines or machine guns, but for helping the realisation by races of their affinity of minds, their mutual obligation of a common humanity. Such a rare event did happen and the path was built between our people and the Chinese in an age when physical obstruction needed heroic personality to overcome it and the mental barrier a moral power of uncommon magnitude. The two leading races of that age met, not as rivals on the battle-field each claiming the right to be the sole tyrant on earth, but as noble friends, glorying in their exchange of gifts. Then came a slow relapse into isolation, covering up the path with its accumulated dust of indifference. Today our old friends have beckoned to us again, generously helping us to retrace that ancient path obliterated by the inertia of forgetful centuries,—and we rejoice.

This is, indeed, a great day for me, a day long looked for, when I should be able to redeem, on behalf of our people, an ancient pledge implicit in our past, the pledge to maintain the intercourse of culture and friendship between our people and the people of China, an intercourse whose foundations were laid eighteen hundred years back by our ancestors with infinite patience and sacrifice. When I went to China several years ago I felt a touch of that great stream of life that sprang from the heart of India and overflowed across mountain and desert into that distant land, fertilising the heart of its people. I thought of that great pilgrimage, of those noble heroes, who, for the sake of their faith, their ideal of the liberation of self that leads to the perfect love which unites all beings, risked life and accepted banishment from home and all that was familiar to them. Many perished and left no trace behind. A few were spared to tell their story, a story not of adventurers and trespassers whose heroism has proved a mere romantic excuse for careers of unchecked brigandage, but a story of pilgrims who came to offer their gifts of love and wisdom, a story indelibly recorded in the cultural memory of their hosts. I read it when I was received there as a representative of a revered race and felt proud as I traced the deep

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marks our ancestors had left behind of their achievements. But I also felt the humiliation of our long lasting evil fate that has obscured for us in an atmosphere of inanity the great human value of a noble endeavour, one of the most precious in the history of man.

I told my Chinese hosts on that occasion: "My friends, I have come to ask you to re-open the channel of communication which I hope is still there ; for though overgrown with weeds of oblivion, its lines can still be traced. I have not the same voice that my ancestors had. I have not the wisdom they possessed. My life has not attained that consciousness of fulfilment needed to make this message fruitful. We in India are a defeated race ; we have no power, political, military or commercial ; we do not know how to help you or injure you materially. But fortunately we can still meet you as your guests, your hosts, your brothers and your friends. Let that happen. I invite you to us as you have invited me. I do not know whether you have heard of the institution I have established in my land. Its one object is to let India welcome the world to its heart. Let what seems a barrier become a path, and let us unite, not in spite of our differences, but through them. For differences can never be wiped away, and life would be so much the poorer without them. Let all human races keep their own personalities, and yet come together, not in a uniformity that is dead, but in a unity that is living."

That has happened and friends are here from China with their gift of friendship and co-operation. The Hall which is to be opened today will serve both as the nucleus and as a symbol of that larger understanding that is to grow with time. Here students and scholars will come from China and live as part of ourselves, sharing our life and letting us share theirs, and by offering their labours in a common cause, help in slowly re-building that great course of fruitful contact between our peoples, that has been interrupted for ten centuries. For this Visva-Bharati is, and will, I hope, remain a meeting place for individuals from all countries, East or West, who believe in the unity of mankind and are prepared to suffer for their faith. I believe in such individuals even though their efforts may appear to be too insignificant to be recorded in history.

It might be supposed that in a world so closely knit by railways, steamships and air lines, where almost every big city is cosmopolitan, such special invitations for contact are superfluous. But, unfortunately, the contacts that are being made today have done more to estrange and alienate peoples from one another than physical inaccessibility

ever did. We are discovering for ourselves the painful truth that nothing divides so much as the wrong kind of nearness. Peoples seem to be coming in each other's way, dodging and trapping one another, without ever coming together. We meet others, either as tourists when we merely slide against the surface of their life, entering hotels only to disappear from their land, or as exploiters in one disguise or another. We are living in a world where nations are divided into two main groups—those who trample on others' freedom, and those who are unable to guard their own; so that while we have too much of intrusion on others' rights, we have hardly any intercourse with their culture. It is a terrorised world, dark with fear and suspicion, where peaceful races in dread of predatory hordes are retreating into isolation for security.

I am reminded of my experience as we were travelling up from Shanghai to Nanking along the great river, Yang Tse. All through the night I kept on coming out of my cabin to watch the beautiful scene on the banks, the sleeping cottages with their solitary lamps, the silence spread over the hills, dim with mist. When morning broke and brought into view fleets of boats coming down the river, their sails stretching high into the air, a picture of life's activity with its perfect grace of freedom, I was deeply moved and felt that my own sail had caught the wind and was carrying me from captivity, from the sleeping past, out into the great world of man. It brought to my mind different stages in the history of man's progress.

In the night each village was self-centred, each cottage stood bound by the chain of unconsciousness. I knew, as I gazed on the scene, that vague dreams were floating about in this atmosphere of sleeping souls, but what struck my mind more forcibly was the fact that when men are asleep they are shut up within the very narrow limits of their own individual lives. The lamps exclusively belonged to the cottages, which in their darkness were in perfect isolation. Perhaps, though I could not see them, some prowling bands of thieves were the only persons awake, ready to exploit the weakness of those who were asleep.

When daylight breaks we are free from the enclosure and the exclusiveness of our individual life. It is then that we see the light which is for all men and for all times. It is then that we come to know each other and come to co-operate in the field of life. This was the message that was brought in the morning by the swiftly moving boats. It was the freedom of life in their outspread sails that spoke to me; and I felt glad. I hoped and prayed that

morning had truly come in the human world and that the light had broken forth.

[This age to which we belong, does it not still represent night in the human world, a world asleep, whilst individual races are shut up within their own limits, calling themselves nations, which barricade themselves, as these sleeping cottages were barricaded, with shut doors, with bolts and bars, with prohibitions of all kinds? Does not all this represent the dark age of civilization, and have we not begun to realize that it is the robbers who are out and awake?]

But I do not despair. As the early bird, even while the dawn is yet dark, sings out and proclaims the rising of the sun, so my heart sings to proclaim the coming of a great future which is already close upon us. We must be ready to welcome this new age. There are some people, who are proud and wise and practical, who say that it is not in human nature to be generous, that men will always fight one another, that the strong will conquer the weak and that there can be no real moral foundation for man's civilisation. We cannot deny the facts of their assertion that the strong have their rule in the human world: but I refuse to accept this as a revelation of truth.

It is co-operation and love, mutual trust and mutual aid which make for strength and real merit of civilization. New spiritual and moral power must continually be developed to enable men to assimilate their scientific gains, to control their weapons and machines, or these will dominate and enslave them. I know that many will point to the weakness of China and India and tell us that thrown as we are among other ruthlessly strong and aggressive world peoples, it is necessary to emphasise power and progress in order to avoid destruction. It is indeed true that we are weak and disorganised, at the mercy of every barbaric force, but that is not because of our love of peace but because we no longer pay the price of our faith by dying for it. We must learn to defend our humanity against the insolence of the strong, only taking care that we do not imitate their ways and, by turning ourselves brutal, destroy those very values which alone make our humanity worth defending. For danger is not only of the enemy without but of the treason within us. We had, for over a century, been so successfully hypnotised and dragged by the prosperous West behind its chariot that, though choked by the dust, deafened by the noise, humbled by our helplessness, overwhelmed by speed, we yet agreed to acknowledge that this chariot-drive was

progress, and that progress was civilization., If we ever ventured to ask, however humbly : "Progress towards what, and progress for whom ?"—it was considered to be peculiarly and ridiculously oriental to entertain such doubts about the absoluteness of progress. It is only of late that a voice has been heeded by us, bidding us take account not only of the scientific perfection of the chariot, but of the depth of ditches lying across its path. Today we are emboldened to ask: what is the value of progress if it make a desert of this beautiful world of man? And though we speak as members of a nation that is humiliated and oppressed and lies bleeding in the dust, we must never acknowledge the defeat, the last insult, the utter ruin of our spirit being conquered, of our faith being sold. We need to hear again and again, and never more than in this modern world of head-hunting and cannibalism in disguise that:—By the help of unrighteousness men do prosper, men do gain victories over their enemies, men do attain what they desire; but they perish at the root.

It is to this privilege of preserving, not the mere body of our customs and conventions, but the moral force which has given quality to our civilization and made it worthy of being honoured, that I invite the co-operation of the people of China, recalling the profound words of their sage, Lao-tze : ,Those who have virtue attend to their obligations; those who have no virtue attend to their claims. Progress which is not related to an inner ideal, but to an attraction which is external, seeks to satisfy endless claims. But civilization, which is an ideal, gives us power and joy to fulfil our obligations.

Let us therefore abide by our obligation to maintain and nourish the distinctive merit of our respective cultures and not be misled into believing that what is ancient is necessarily outworn and what is modern is indispensable. When we class things as modern or old we make a great mistake in following our calendar of dates. We know that the flowers of Spring are old, that they represent the dawn of life on earth,—but are they therefore symbols of the dead and discarded? Would we rather replace them with artificial flowers made of rags, because they were made "yesterday"? It is not what is old or what is modern that we should love and cherish but what has truly a permanent human value. And can anything be more worthy of being cherished than the beautiful spirit of the Chinese culture that has made the people love material things without the strain of greed, that has made them love the things of this earth, clothe them with tender grace

without turning them materialistic ? They have instinctively grasped the secret of the rhythm of things,—not the secret of power that is in science, but the secret of expression. This is a great gift, for God alone knows this secret. I envy them this gift and wish our people could share it with them.

I do not know what distinctive merit we have which our Chinese friends and others may wish to share. Once indeed our sages dedicated themselves to the ideal of perfect sympathy and intellect, in order to win absolute freedom through wisdom and absolute love through pity. Today we cannot boast of either such wisdom or such magnanimity of heart. But I hope we are not yet reduced to such absolute penury of both as not to be able to offer at least a genuine atmosphere of hospitality, of an earnestness to cross over our limitations and move nearer to the hearts of other peoples and understand somewhat of the significance of the endless variety of man's creative effort.

## TO AFRICA

In that early dusk of a distracted age,  
when God in scorn of his own workmanship,  
violently shook his head at his primitive efforts,  
an impatient wave snatched you away, Africa,  
from the bosom of the East,  
and kept you brooding in a dense enclosure  
of niggardly light,  
guarded by giant trees.

There you slowly stored  
the baffling mysteries of the wilderness  
in the dark cellars of your profound privacy,  
conned the signals of land and water difficult to read,  
and the secret magic of Nature invoked in your mind  
magic rites from beyond the boundaries  
of consciousness.

You donned the disguise of deformity to mock the terrible,  
and in a mimicry of a sublime ferocity  
made yourself fearful to conquer fear.

You are hidden, alas, under a black veil,  
which obscures your human dignity to the darkened vision  
of contempt.

With man-traps stole upon you those hunters  
whose fierceness was keener than the fangs of your wolves,  
whose pride was blinder than your lightless forests.  
The savage greed of the civilised stripped naked its unashamed  
inhumanity.

You wept and your cry was smothered,  
your forest trails became muddy with tears and blood,  
while the nailed boots of the robbers  
left their indelible prints  
along the history of your indignity.

And all the time across the sea,  
church bells were ringing in their towns and villages,  
the children were lulled in mothers' arms,  
and poets sang hymns to Beauty.

Today when on the western horizon  
the sun-set sky is stifled with dust-storm,  
when the beast, creeping out of its dark den  
proclaims the death of the day with ghastly howls,  
come, you poet of the fatal hour,  
stand at that ravished woman's door,  
ask for her forgiveness,  
and let that be the last great word  
in the midst of the delirium of a diseased  
Continent.

*Rabindranath Tagore*

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## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM

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It is one of the supreme achievements of Sri Ramakrishna that he opened the eyes of the 19th and 20th century world to the deep significance of religious symbolism, and that he demonstrated that symbols are not mere empty forms, but partake of divine life in all its fulness. Symbols, and in particular religious symbols, are not mere objective pictures, but are highly subjective, in that they form the most sacred and intimate part of our being. In them we live and move and have our being, and in truth they hold more reality—if I may use this expression—than we do ourselves in our surface consciousness.

When a new religion is born, that is, when a renewed impulse comes from the depths of the soul to the surface of mind, the divinity of form, the life in form and the significance of this life are again realized. And as a result, a revolution takes place in the mental and social life of the people.

When a religion is getting old and stale its forms lose their significance. They seem to have lost their life. Gods become mere images. Rituals become mere mechanical usage. The meaning is not only lost, but the soul seems to have become dissociated and flown away. The life of the symbol has again retired to the deepest recesses of mind, and becomes so secret that it is not even known to exist, and the form of the symbol has become commonplace.

When Sri Ramakrishna came on the religious stage in India, religion had become very much like that. The Mother Kali had become a mere image to the greater part of the people, a form which was mechanically served or for the most a life that was not understood. The same as regards other deities. But the great Saint of Dakshineshwar could not be satisfied with mere lip-worship, with mere play with formula and ritual. His soul thirsted for realization. Was the Mother Kali a reality, was she God indeed? Or was she a mere form-relic of the past without significance? Years passed in a most intensive striving for realization. The depth of desire for truth, the depths of suffering because of the lack of knowledge, we can hardly understand. Sri Ramakrishna was like a drowning man, to whom a breath of air is the one and only necessity. He was one

of the few true Bhaktas. Narada says that true Bhakti is the feeling of the deepest misery when God is temporarily lost. Ramakrishna had really known God from the very beginning, for if this had not been the case, he would not have been able to experience this infinitely deep suffering and longing for realization.

Everybody who is searching for something, knows what he is searching, otherwise he would not search. Similarly every religious seeker really knows God, otherwise he would not trouble to seek God. But he desires to bring God near. 'From the distance of the objective he wants to bring him to the nearness of the subjective. From the depths of the unconscious he wants to bring him to the surface of the conscious. The door between the infinitely great world of the Unconscious and the little world of the conscious requires to be opened, so that at any time life may pass to and fro.' When I use the word Unconscious I mean it in the sense of the latest school of psychology. It is everything which is not conscious in us at the moment and which is yet our psychological heritage. It is not quite correct to say it includes the superconscious as well as the sub-conscious, unless we remember that the super-conscious may be conscious as well as unconscious.

Few people as yet realize the supreme significance of symbolism in their life. They do not realize that even the words we speak are symbols for inner states. Language is a process of symbolism. Certain simple symbols are easy to learn. The word "hunger" for instance is a name or sound—symbol for an empty and craving state of the stomach. Everybody will understand. But the symbols for spiritual hunger and spiritual appeasement are very difficult to understand. Man became what he is through language which enabled him to talk about his varied experiences with his fellows. But a great deal of misunderstanding in history and at the present day has arisen through language. I do not mean through ignorance of the various languages of the nations, but through lack of contact by means of the underlying and universal language of the collective symbols.

It is clear that there are symbols connected with all our senses. There are sound symbols, visual symbols, olfactory symbols, gustatory symbols and touch symbols. Our "feelings" are rendered in the language of touch or taste. It is interesting that symbols are always connected with the senses. Even things that are far above the senses and beyond contact with the senses are expressed and symbolized by sense-symbols. Simply because there is no alternative.

We think in symbols, we act in symbols, we live in symbols, we learn in symbols.

If we don't realize this, we are not really living. If we don't see that form cannot be seen apart from its in-dwelling and presiding life, we are not really *living*. We are then like dead beings in a dead universe.

We are told that all sound-symbols, nay all life, evolved out of the primeval sound, the Pranava. The supreme symbol is Om, the most sacred and secret word. To most people the word is really secret, because it is too sacred to be understood and realized by them.

It is said that this supreme symbol was known to many peoples. The Egyptians held that the secret name of Ra, the Sun-god, was Ammon. Later it became a commonplace as Ammon-Ra, just as the sacred word of the Hindus is now on the lips of many without being understood. In Syria the word Amen was used. At first it was uttered at the beginning and at the end of prayers. Christians still use it and put it at the end of a prayer, where it is thought to mean : "So be it." Surely it means something like "so be it !" in the deepest sense of supreme creative energy. In the Gospels and in other scriptures we read that "in the beginning was the Word !"

Of the infinite number of sound and other symbols that evolved out of the Word some have been found to be universal, others to be the possession of a particular race or nation, or of the adherents of a particular religion, others again are known only to the inhabitants of a particular district or to the members of a particular clan or family. And others are symbols of individual people, and are of meaning only to them.

The latest schools of psychology, especially that of C. G. Jung, are deeply interested in symbology. They realize that man's life cannot be seen apart from symbols.

In his "Psychology of the Unconscious" Jung has dealt with the symbolism of ancient religions and of the mythology of many races, in connection with the life of ordinary people of the present day. For there is a deeply significant relation between the two. It is now recognized that dreams form the mythology of the individual as much as mythology represents the dream life of a race. Both in mythology and religion and in dreams of individuals there appear the same universal symbols. They are called *archetypes*. These universal symbols have the same meaning to people out of different periods of history, to people in various religions and living in various parts of the world.

They come out of the deepest layers of the "Collective Unconscious".

The "Collective Unconscious" is the great psychic storehouse of humanity. All human experience is laid down in it, from the very beginning of the human race. It is our heritage, and much of it is at our command. Our individual unconscious lives and moves in this collective unconscious, just like our conscious self lives and moves in conscious contact with others in society.

In the Collective Unconscious there is no East or West. When we go into the inner life of man and penetrate those more superficial layers of his consciousness conditioned by the colour of his skin, the climate and soil of his country and the customs of his ancestors, we come to a psychic field which is neither particularly Eastern nor Western. We can even say more. It often happens, as we all know, that Easterners feel deeply attracted to Western life and Westerners to Eastern life. Also it is not at all a rare occurrence, for instance in the religious field, that an Easterner has religious dreams of a typical Western nature, or that a Westerner in a dream unexpectedly experiences the life behind, for instance, the form of an Eastern deity.

One of the Archetypes is "the wise man in the heart". He represents a store of wisdom, and we may perhaps say, our inmost and deepest self. He is known in dreams and visions to people of all races and all religions. His form will as a rule be in accordance with the tradition of the dreamer or seer, though by no means in every case.

It appears that it is this "wise man" who sends messages to our conscious self in the form of dreams, day-dreams and visions. These messages are contained in the language of symbols. Our unconscious knows this language very well, but to our conscious personality it is very much of a secret language.

Because we do not know much of the language of the Unconscious we understand little of nothing of these dream messages. The messages consist of combinations of symbols in such a way that they form a little story. Sometimes the story is meant as an eye-opener when we are about to make some mistake. As such they contain a warning. Sometimes they give a hint as to future action or are anticipatory. Sometimes they point to a mistake made long ago as the root of a present problem or trouble. Sometimes they contain only an impersonal parable of universal interest.

We must try to understand the language of symbolism. I feel tempted to relate a dream of the last mentioned type, dreamt by a person I know very well. It was the first of a series of dreams, dreamt by a young man. I shall relate it in the first person.

"I dreamt that I was in an ancient gloomy castle, a vast mediaeval building with a number of dark passages, rooms and halls, and secret pitfalls and staircases. I was with a companion. There was hardly any furniture in it. Everything was very old and very vast, it was like a labyrinth. I did not feel at all at home. I was afraid, and for some reason my conscience was not clear. The same applied to my companion. I knew that the Lord of the Castle was a friend, but of what avail was that in that dark and terrible place? I was afraid, and wanted to get away. Then suddenly I heard someone coming--something approaching. We both got into a panic and fled, each in an opposite direction. I fled into a dark passage and fell through a trap-door. Then I came through a short passage into a vast cage. It was infinitely large, and completely dark. Wire netting was all round. I was doomed to pass an infinity in that cage. My sorrow was intense, my suffering was indescribable. In the depth of my woe I uttered from time to time a wailing cry. It was terrible in its utter forlornness, loneliness and darkness. There seemed to be no way out, no hope. Once there was a faint light, and I saw the Lord of the castle looking at me from behind the bars. Then the darkness and terror engulfed me again. I uttered my cry, which I can still hear vibrating in my inner ear.

Something in me said that this infinity had to last thirty years.

Then this part of the dream suddenly ended and a new chapter, as it were, began. Again I am in a castle. But it is not the same 'I', and it is not the same castle. The castle is not gloomy and dark and empty. It is full of light, and full of people, moving about on their business. It is full of furniture, everything is neat and up-to-date. The only point of similarity with the first castle is that it is also very big. Again I have at first a companion, but later I am alone.

This time I have not at all a bad conscience. If in the first castle I did not know what to do and was full of fear, now on the other hand I am there with a purpose, and I am full of confidence that I shall achieve. I am there in that place because I have heard that in the underground depths of the castle is shut up a miserable man. This man is supposed to utter from time to time a wailing cry.

I have taken upon me to help him, and to liberate him from his prison. ( There is not the slightest self-identification with that man—he is now a complete stranger. ) For this purpose I go round in the castle ; I enquire of many people how I can find the prisoner ; I visit libraries and look into books, and study maps of the castle, in order to find out where he is and how I can get to him. And gradually I get deeper and deeper down in the castle where everything is getting more and more like as in the first part of the dream. But I am not at all afraid. At last I hear the wailing cry of the prisoner in the distance and it touches me strangely and deeply. Then finally, I stand before the heavily bolted door of the great prison, and am about to liberate him. Then the dream stops.”

This dream contains a great number of significant hints. I shall mention only a few. The castle is the world. In the first part it is ancient and gloomy. The human personality makes mistakes and lives in ignorance, there is no purpose, no initiative, no discipline. It lives passively and passionately. It represents one aspect and part of our past : ages of ignorance and selfhood are, as it were, condensed in this symbolic picture of the lonely man in the dark and terrible castle. The world is terrible to him who lives in darkness. The world is a labyrinth ! Where is light ? Where is the way out of prison ?

Yet even in the deepest depths of materiality there is one note of hope, however slight. Once the Lord of the castle was seen dimly behind the bars. But the dark night of matter is resumed. It lasts an infinity. The soul groans in darkness.

But the saviour lives. He goes out into the world to help another. He does not go out to help himself, he has the definite purpose to help another. By helping *another* he eventually liberates himself. I think this may be one of the most significant hints of the dream.

At first we have companions, in ignorance as well as in knowledge, in sin as well as in virtue. Later when we begin to do matters in right earnest we have to face life alone. Our knowledge begins to be specialized, certain things nobody can understand. Nobody can help us to choose in the greater problems of our course but the divine voice in our heart, giving purpose and direction to our life. It takes away our primitive fear of the world, our fear of life, and inspires us with supreme confidence.

In dreams of this kind we are in touch with psychological and

spiritual realities. People who have such dreams—and they are not a few—affirm that they present a world with certain happenings which in a way is more real than the world of everyday life. In fact that well-known every-day world is much more dream-like.

The messages which come to us from that inner world are sometimes of such a nature that we could not possibly invent them. The Unconscious is a wonderful creator and has great dramatising capacities.

In this Unconscious live a great many psychological factors. So many parts of our personality are in it, sometimes requiring to be re-adjusted, or sometimes seriously at war with one another. In that case we speak about a “complex”.

All the happenings in our dreams, tell us something about our unknown inner life. All the persons that appear are part personalities of ourselves or of collective humanity. If we dream for instance of our mother, the dream has in nine out of ten cases nothing to do with our own mother, but the person of the mother is the symbol of the mother-aspect in us or of the Universe in man. To unevolved people appear only ordinary part-personalities, to people that are striving to attain god or self-realization, higher personalities appear, either in dream or vision. These personalities then come out of deeper layers of the Unconscious. They are universal.

Such universal symbols or archetypes let us consider for a moment. One category consists of symbols like, for instance, a crown, a triangle, an abyss, a ray of light, a door or gate. Whether they appear to a European, an Asiatic, an African or an American, they contain the same meanings, and hold the same messages whether in dream or mythology. Another category consists of personalities—gods and demons. Former schools of psychology used to regard the gods and the devils of religion as phantasmagoria, the latest school takes them very seriously. There are many thinkers to-day who realize that the deities as well as the devils are psychological realities. They live and move and have their being within us. The deities preside in our superconscious, the devils in our subconscious. Both have to be realized to exist by the spiritual seeker. It may be dangerous to ignore the demons. I like to narrate a dream of the same person mentioned before. This dream was a terrible experience, which shook him to the very depths of his being and made a lasting impression upon him.

The person in question dreamt that he was in a room with a



friend who was lying down helpless on the ground. First a glorious looking young man came in, radiating light and love. In spirit the dreamer bowed down before him, realizing his supreme spiritual significance. This man occupied himself mostly with the helpless friend. Then by another door entered another man, who did not come up to the group, but kept somewhat in the background. The dreamer went to him and said : "Now we are all together here, and alone in the world, let us be friends," and he tried to shake hands with the fourth person. But this one turned his back to the dreamer. The dreamer, however, insisted, and tried to grasp his hand again. Then suddenly this fourth man managed to clasp the *left* hand of the dreamer, looking at him with a triumphant and sardonic smile, not letting go the hand at all, and the dreamer suddenly knew with great terror : It is the devil ! And he tried to save himself by rushing back to waking consciousness. For days after he lived in terror, for the dream had been of a startling reality, and he still saw those evil eyes, and the pointed nose, and felt the claw-like grasp. He had never thought of the possibility of "the devil" really existing in some way or other, and had regarded him only as some mediaeval phantasm.

Years after he spoke about this dream to Jung, the great psychiatrist. Jung confirmed the conclusion he had arrived at himself by that time. All through the period of his spiritual striving and unfoldment he had systematically refused to see evil, to recognize the dark side in Nature and in his own self. He had imagined everything to be good, Nature to be pure. In short, he had idealized everything, all the time, however, nurturing the dark forces in his unconscious. The Message from within was that he must recognize the existence of those dark forces, in order to be able to overcome them. They are like a hidden disease which, if we do not take the proper medicine against it, may seriously impair our health and eventually destroy our body.

In those four persons we have a complete picture of the main forces in human psychology. The dreamer himself is the conscious personality, the active person. The helpless friend is his unconscious self, which is passive. The state of lying down is only a symbol of passivity. The glorious spiritual man is a symbol of what we might call the higher self of humanity, and the fourth man of the lower self or collective devil.

In our unconscious live forces and personalities which are intimately our own, and others which are collective, that is to say, common to all humanity.

The person who had had this dream, had seen his *personal* shadow or personal devil several times in previous dreams, and always recognized it as such. Once it took the shape of his own double, trying to tempt him to stop meditation practices and enjoy the world, another time it took the shape of a great hairy ape. He always knew it was part of his *own* nature ; he was slightly afraid, but watched it full of interest. This time, however, it was something outside his personal nature. It was something not belonging to him that was making an attack on his personality. And he was mortally afraid in a spiritual sense. The experience and vision of Sri Ramakrishna when he saw this "devil" pass out of him, is well known. He called it the "papa-purusha".

In connection with this there is another interesting universal symbol. It is the symbolism of right and left. Among all peoples, in all religions, the right hand symbolizes the conscious, the light, the spiritually or morally right. The left hand symbolizes the unconscious, the dark, the sinister. The gods and helpful psychological powers have been associated in all ages with the right hand. The word "right" does not for nothing indicate a moral right. In the English language the association between "left" and "wrong" or "dark" does not exist. In Latin, Italian and other languages, however, it is different. "Left" is "sinistro", which means both left and sinister or gloomy. In India also the right hand takes precedence over the left, the right hand is meant for pure purposes, the left for impure ones.

If we read books of Eastern psychology, we are struck by the number of gods and demons that are mentioned. Most interesting is, for instance, the Tibetan Book of the Dead, so ably edited by Dr. Evans-Wentz. The pleasant and wrathful deities represent different mental states. Modern psychology takes those psychological entities very seriously. In some abnormal cases it happens that a human personality becomes subverted, his conscious becomes unconscious, and a part of his unconscious takes conscious control. In the East one would say: such a man has become possessed by a devil. In the West he is nowadays not exorcised by a priest, but dealt with by the psychoanalyst.

Our so-called "enlightened age", which has now luckily come to an end because scientists have begun to realize they hardly know anything yet, had neglected and ignored all these powers in our unconscious. When no explanation can be found it is always easiest to deny things. This ostrich policy in science is now dying out.

The deities of the superconscious, as well as the devils of the subconscious are collective symbols, built up by many generations of god-worshippers and devil-fearers. Great persons, teachers and prophets, became such living symbols in the collective Unconscious. They are of course not a product of the human mind, they have life and soul of their own. They are unseen personalities moving in the collective unconscious world, and appearing to the conscious personality in messages from the Unseen: in dreams and visions.

The Divine Mother appears to persons all over the world and has appeared in all ages. Her form and special attributes may vary according to the religion and the period in which the beholder lives, yet she is the same divine power in the soul of all people and in the heart of humanity.

The same applies to the other great Deities. In the dreams and visions which grant us a glimpse into the deepest layers of our being, where form ceases to be, lie the great realities in symbolic form, realities "more real" than the fleeting show of "real life". The deeper we dig into the soul, the more universal, the more real the substance which we find. All details of the individual lives, the little fames, glories, vanities and beauties, will all pass away but the great Deities at the very bottom of the soul will not pass away, for they are eternal. Civilizations may come up and go down, ages may pass, and everything on the face of the earth may be changed, yet man will always again worship the Mother Goddess, he will always again bow to the divine Teacher in the deepest recess of his heart. To the Deities in the soul of man, because they are great realities, will eventually always be the victory, though the screen of night is sure to hide the light from time to time. The dark forces in the unconscious—death, ignorance and Adharma—will masquerade each time in the history of the world as well as in the history of the individual, in a different form, but the light at the centre of the universe, that is, in man's heart, will always be one and the same, its blessed rays piercing, from time to time, through the gloom. In the words of the Gita:—"Whenever Adharma prevails and Dharma declines, then I manifest myself in a human form to re-establish Dharma and to destroy evil". Sages like Sri Ramakrishna come on the crest of the divine wave, which is bound to come from time to time, welling up out of the depths of the soul of mankind.

The importance of the lesser deities and of the demons that appear to our inner vision must not be overrated. The great mystics

as well as the students of psychology warn against this. We must not be swept off our feet by them, but realize that *we* as individual souls with the grace of God are masters of our fate and of our ultimate goal. In the course of time nothing can hinder our progress without our will. If we strive towards the very highest we must aim to be free, both of the entities of our subconscious and of the beings in the superconscious. The latter may seem strange. At the end of the third book of Patanjali we read that response to the overtures of divine shapes which appear to us in meditation, is a sure means of preventing us of attaining the highest spiritual goal.

The great Tibetan yogi Milarepa said:—"The visions of the forms of the Deities upon which one meditateth are merely the signs attending perseverance in meditation. They have no intrinsic worth in themselves." The Demchog Tantra gives the same idea: "Devatas are but symbols representing the various things which occur on the path, such as the helpful impulses and the stages attained by their means." Both quotations ( taken from Dr. Evans-Wentz's "Milarepa" ) could almost have been taken from a recent text book of psychology. It is also the message of the Buddha that Truth and Liberation lie beyond the Deities. All who have studied the life of Sri Ramakrishna, know that, in order to attain the highest realization, he had to overcome even the Mother Herself. He had to go beyond Her, he had to go deeper, and it took him a tremendous struggle before he could manage to do it.

And yet he could never have become what he was if he had not been fully and unreservedly given unto Her. Also this is part of his message, worthy of notice to a world in which there are so many that imagine they can arrive at Truth directly, without the aid of divinity, without the help of spiritual symbolism.

Thus we have seen that, on the one hand, the Gods are symbols of great realities of spirit. The Gods are more real than we, because they stand above individuals, races and history. Relatively and comparatively speaking, we are mere dreams, continually moving and changing. Our destiny, our real life lies in the deities and gurus in our inmost being. For they are eternal in as far as humanity is eternal.

But it is difficult to take a symbol for the supreme reality, if possible at all. "That" is beyond symbols. Silence seems to be the fittest symbol for it. In this connection it is interesting that the highest ( or perhaps one but highest ) picture in the series of mystical

Tarot cards is "the World". As if the universe were the fittest symbol for Reality, for the Self.

The gods are the primeval words, the fundamental moving powers of our psychology. They are the great secrets of the universe. In ancient Egypt it was believed that if one knew the secret names of the gods, one became all-wise and all-powerful. Thus indeed it is. It is man's task to learn the secrets which are, strangely enough, more manifest and more real than himself ! A great Persian mystic once said: "God is manifest, and if we do not see Him, we are blind !"

Every form in the universe is a symbol, since it is the expression of some indwelling life. It has a message for us if we care to listen. Every happening in life is symbolic, every incident contains a message to us, a message from the wise man in the Unconscious, a message from the Mother, a message from God. Those who have the eyes to see, know that they can learn from even the most insignificant looking events. To us many things seem trivial and insignificant. To the great ones like Sri Ramakrishna they are pregnant with meaning. They know the secret language of the universe. Therefore they tell us to watch continually and listen with an open heart—to be always "at it".

Of course there is symbolism in all the states of consciousness. Dream symbolism is in a way very remarkable because sometimes symbols appear which are entirely new to us. They startle us with their newness. They come to us out of the collective unconscious. We suddenly realize that there is beyond our little personal world a great world of unknown realities.

Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated that all religions are fundamentally one. They are as so many roads leading to the same-one-goal. They may err in some minor points of theology or in some of their methods of achievement, but in their *basis* they are one. Psychology has come to the same conclusion, in the first place not by way of personal realization, but by comparative studies and by the ordinary methods of science. The study of the collective unconscious proves the unity of religious experience beyond any doubt. The same laws apply to the mind and the heart of the European and the Asiatic, and what is more, the same laws apply to his soul. Deep down in the soul there is no East or West, there is only humanity. Deep down in the soul the quarrels of the religions as to their supremacy cease. There is only Truth.

## THE QUINTESSENCE OF GANDHISM

Nirmal Kumar Bose

THE foundation of Mahatma Gandhi's life is formed by his firm faith in God. God is the Universal Being which encompasses everything and of which humanity is one small part. He is the Law working behind the universe, for the Law and the Lawmaker are finally one and the same. Human life has been given to us so that we may realize the working of that Law and then set our lives in accordance with it. From personal experience Gandhi has come to the conclusion that it is the law of love, and not struggle and competition, which holds together the universe ; and so he tries to set every act of his life in conformity with love and a sense of human unity.

But blind love, either of God or of men, is of no avail. It is only when love gives us a fuller understanding of the universe that it becomes precious and worth striving for. In Gandhi's own case, this realization comes best through loving struggle to free mankind from all forms of oppression and not chiefly through meditation and contemplation. But he readily admits that for others, the path may be different. There are many paths to the same Universal Truth ; and he feels happy if every one of us follows his own light and never lays down the burden which he has been appointed to carry.

But whatever may be the particular path which one chooses, one thing is certain, namely, that the chief obstacle to realization comes ultimately from our own personal selves. Laziness, selfishness and the pride that we have known the whole truth are the three greatest obstacles in our path. Our lives should therefore be an unceasing effort for self-purification ; our activity should be as uninterrupted as that of the "drop of water in the ocean". And if such be the will of God, this tireless pursuit of Truth and consequent self-purification, may eventually bring about a happier state of life for mankind on earth. It is in the realization of Truth alone that we can find the source of abiding happiness.

This forms the core of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and whatever he does or preaches springs ultimately from this fundamental attitude towards life. The use of Satyagraha as a political weapon is only the above law of individual spiritual life projected into the sphere of mass-action. Satyagraha is, for Mahatma Gandhi, the same dis-

cipline for realizing the truth of human unity as the individual's personal life might be ; while Swaraj is synonymous with the undefined, yet limitless, term *moksha* or emancipation.

The above ideas of Mahatma Gandhi do not, however, constitute the whole of his philosophical equipment. He has certain personal likes and dislikes or *samskaras*, derived either from his life's experiences or from the masters whom he reveres, and it is through the medium of these *samskaras* that his universal ideas express themselves, and sometimes even suffer a little distortion. Of such ideas we can readily name two, one of which he has apparently derived from Hinduism and the other from Christianity. His predilection for forms or institutions which have endured through ages, in other words, the recognition of permanency as a quality of Truth, has obviously been derived from his traditional Hindu environment. This has led him into a form of conservatism, which has, however, the redeeming feature that it is subjected to the final tests of reason and morality. In spite of that, Gandhi has a strain of conservatism at the back of his mind, which under certain circumstances, obscures from his view a further character of Truth, namely, its ever-changing and conditional quality, through whose manifestations it is difficult to trace any feature of permanency except perhaps that of Being or of Continuity. In any case, it makes Gandhi constitutionally more receptive of old ideas than of new ones. Perhaps his vision in this direction is further limited by the exigencies of Action. The other *samskara* which has probably been due to his intimate Christian associations is his concept of sin and a special attitude with respect to purity and sexual morality, which has been compared by several critics to that of the mediaeval Christian saints. Such *samskaras*, whether we like them or not, should all be allowed for or ruled out when we try to estimate Gandhi's real greatness which lies in the magnitude of his *realized* universal truths.

A further study of Mahatma Gandhi's ideas also reveals the strong influence exerted upon him by Ruskin and Tolstoy. That gives a meaning to his hatred of industrialism and all forms of centralized control. In essence, it means a final reliance upon freedom as the only condition of human growth. With Tolstoy and Ruskin, Mahatma Gandhi believes that the root of the present distress lies in man's selfishness and in his predatory habit of living upon the toils of others. Most men are apt to forget that all mankind is ultimately one, and that all must either rise or fall together. They usurp power for their own sake or for the sake of their class, and thus

bring into being much misery which could otherwise have been avoided. It is in the diagnosis of present day ills that he agrees most closely with the authors named above. And he also agrees with them in holding that selfishness can only be overcome by unselfishness, hatred by love and immorality by morality and by nothing else. Gandhi also considers with Tolstoy that the "law of bread-labour" is the first moral law of life. According to this law, every man should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, in some labour connected with agriculture or its allied industries. Machines have their place in human economy, but they should only be employed to lighten human labour and for no other purpose.

This leads us on to a comparison of Mahatma Gandhi's ideas with Socialism and Communism. Gandhi believes with Socialists and Communists that the ideal is equal distribution ; but finding that impossible of attainment, he strives for equitability rather than for mathematical equality. Here we must, however, remember that Gandhi's activities are directed not towards the establishment of any particular social or economic order, but towards the purification of the means of revolution in conformity with the spirit of love and of human unity. He has only one thing to say with regard to the final state. In it every individual must find the freedom and opportunity of exercising his special talents and abilities in the best interests of humanity, according to his own light. On his own side, too, the individual must be prepared to be neglected and to suffer if his views do not agree with those of society, i.e., he must pay the price for the freedom he enjoys. With that solitary reservation on behalf of human freedom, Gandhi is prepared to leave the actual task of social or constitutional re-organization to future generations of men, while he would prefer to reserve for himself the duty of attuning the means of revolution to the supreme law of love and truth.

Consistent with that law, there can be only one form of revolution ; and it is here that he departs farthest from the established schools of Socialism and Communism. According to Gandhi, the only moral form of revolution is Non-violent Non-cooperation. The institutions of the present world, based on exploitation as they are, continue to exist because both the exploiters and the exploited cooperate in their maintenance. If both could be inspired to dissociate themselves from the existing system—the one by shedding selfishness and the other fear—then the present order would go to pieces in a moment. But human nature refuses to yield so easily. It yields



only to constant effort and only when that effort is inspired by an abiding trust in the potential goodness of human nature. The appeal to man works best through the heart and not the head. If a band of non-cooperators suffer in the process of non-cooperation, but do not retaliate, then the heart of the exploiters is bound to be touched by the suffering, and a way is sure to be opened for human reconciliation and a new social synthesis. But during the whole of that non-cooperation, the heart of the resisters must ever remain infused with the spirit of love and of human unity, and their hand held back by an infinitude of patience. It is only such love that can work miracles.

This means that Gandhi relies more upon Will than on Habit in the correction of human wrongs. While conceding that man actually lives more by habit than by will, he maintains that it is better that it should be otherwise. This process may seem a long and arduous one, but Gandhi is sure that it is the shortest because it is also the surest. It is only on the foundation of intelligent and ceaseless endeavour that the edifice of social equality and of human happiness can be securely based. Happiness which comes through habit, through the enforcement of a particular social order from above, however perfect in architectural form it may be, is bound to fail in the long run. For it does not eradicate the root of the evil which lies within. That evil cannot be overcome by violence, but by ceaseless efforts of self-purification.

In the last analysis, therefore, Gandhi hardly holds out any hope for mankind, none whatsoever in a historical destiny. He asks us to rely upon God and exercise our energy and our love to the utmost. He shows us a supremely moral way of revolution, which may, through the grace of God, bring about a condition of equality and of happiness on earth. It is in the perfection of this means of revolution that Mahatma Gandhi's chief contribution to humanity lies. Perhaps the means are old, as he himself would prefer to say ; but it is he who has first of all rescued it from the world's private armoury and fashioned out of it a first-class instrument of wide political application.

## SHAH LATIF—A MYSTIC OF SINDH

Gurdial Mullik

"WHAT is your age?" They asked him when the hair of his head had turned silvery and that of his beard snow-white. He smiled. Then one of them, who could not check his curiosity, remarked, "Three score and ten years?" He remained silent. His inquirers grew impatient and angrily exclaimed, "Why do you not tell us?" He replied, "I am only nine months old." "What?" They rejoined, red with resentment, "that is a lie." "I speak the truth," answered the mystic, "for I reckon my age from the moment I saw the light of His face and not when I first announced with a cry my arrival into this world."

Such being their conception of chronology, it is not difficult to understand the reticence of the mystics regarding the events of their earthly life, and their impatience, if not annoyance, with the chronicler. They would seem to say to him, "Why loiter in the paths and by-paths of the past? We ourselves always strove to live in the eternal and ever-new present, the contours and colours of which are to be found in our story and song. Why not be our fellow-traveller? Why, instead, walk behind us and measure our footprints on the sands of time?" That is the reason why the mystics, though often unchronicled, are not, however, unsung.

And so if this sketch of Shah Latif—the greatest mystic-poet of Sindh,—does not give a factual account of his life, the writer would crave the indulgence of the reader. A reference, however, will be made to certain outstanding events and incidents of his life, as far as possible, so that through them may be traced the tone and trend of the unconscious unfoldment of his impulse and endeavour towards the attainment of the Real. Though we have no Time-machine like that of H. G. Wells' imagination, to enable us to range up and down the centuries and locate each and every event in terms of time, and although the track trodden by the mystics is as visible to the naked eye as the watery route along which the ocean-going liners travel, yet in the external aspects of their life the spirit can discover an outline and an image of the path they pursued.

It is said that when Shah Latif was yet a child, of barely four summers ( 1693 A. D. ), he was sent to a priest-cum-pedagogue to learn

the Arabic alphabet. On the very first day, a strange thing happened. "Say *aliph*,<sup>1</sup>" said the preceptor to the pupil. "*Aliph*," repeated the pupil. "Say *be*," continued the instructor. The pupil refused to repeat the second sound. "Say *be*," repeated the teacher in accents of anger, but met with the same result. The incident was reported to the father, who, fortunately, happened to be endowed with the rare gift of understanding. "The child is right," said the father and with that reply he silenced the teacher and brought little Latif out of the prison, euphemistically called, 'School.' This story may or may not be true, but all the same it illustrates the central concept in the mystic's life. As he says :

"Let there be in your heart  
The play of *Aliph*  
And thou wilt know  
The vanity of book-learning.  
If thou wilt learn  
To look on life with the pure eye,  
Thou wilt know  
That the Name of Allah is enough."

\*                      \*                      \*

"They who have longing in their hearts  
They read only the Page  
Wherein they see the Beloved."

The boy, however, attended daily another school—the school of Nature,—where he learnt the language of life from the "play of this *Aliph*",—Allah.

"With your face sandwiched between your knees,<sup>2</sup> live in solitude."

There everything spoke to him of God, being a witness to the Truth that in diffused diversity there dwells the One, who is without a second.

"Wherever I turn my eyes, it is Him that I see."

<sup>1</sup> *Aliph* and *be* represent the first two letters of the Arabic alphabet, corresponding to the *A* and *B* of the Roman. *Aliph*, being the first letter of the word *Allah*, is also symbolic of God's name in the mystic language of Islam.

<sup>2</sup> A familiar posture of meditation among these mystics.

"Every thing proclaims Him. Every one has become a *Mansur*.<sup>1</sup> How many of them shall I guillotine ?"

His home, too, was fragrant with the earnestness and intensity of spiritual aspiration and endeavour, and it is also there that he learnt Arabic and Persian from his father.

When he grew older his father desired that he should follow in his footsteps and carry on the tradition of the family as preceptors "by special appointment" to the members of the ruling dynasty. Shah Latif consented, more out of courtesy and considerateness for the aged father than out of allegiance to the truth which he had sensed within himself now and again, but which had not as yet been integrated into his life. To him, the lover of the Beautiful, the highest form of worship was to feed oneself on the beauty of the face of the Beloved.

"Fasts and prayers ; well  
They have their value ;  
But there be yet another Light,  
Whereby to see the Beloved.  
It is the light of Love."

And yet he must, to please the *pater familias*, say the prescribed prayers and tell the beads of the rosary. He continued these practices for some years when one day he was shaken out of the slough of conformity by the conversation between two milk-maids which he overheard, and by the behaviour of the goats which had come to the bank of a stream to quench their thirst. One milkmaid said to the other, "I have met my lover so many times ; how many times have you ?" The other answered, "Sister, why keep an account of one's meeting with one's lover ?" Thereupon Shah threw away his rosary, saying : "Indeed, why keep an account with one's lover ?" And he burst forth into a song :—

"Body their rosary,  
Mind their beads,  
Their heart is the harp.  
The threads of longing singing  
In utter unity.  
The One, the only One, is the song within.  
They, whose sleep is prayer, wake even in sleep."

Again, one day when he was sitting by the roadside he saw some travellers bound for Mecca and felt inclined to join them.

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<sup>1</sup> The great mystic of Persia who was stoned to death for his heresy.

Presently he noticed that a herd of thirsty goats after slaking their thirst in a stream of clear, crystal water, went away without even casting a gracious glance at the source of their satisfaction, and Shah exclaimed :

“May I seek and ever seek,  
But may I never meet.”

Yes, the seeker of truth always refuses, so to speak, to be bound down for peace,—peace, which is death ; he must ever be actuated by the spirit of divine discontent, by the incentive of anticipation rather than of realization. He is ever on the wing like the lark which sings at the gate of heaven only because it *sours*. In short, to use a significant phrase of the Sufi of Santiniketan,—an aspirant ought always to be like “the Bedouin of the desert”, with his feet ever in the stirrups. For, is not travelling more brimful of the ecstasy of adventure than the joy of reaching the destination ?

Now, love alone can renew every day the vision and the worship of the Beautiful. And so, when Shah was still in the heyday of his youth, there was vouchsafed to him an experience which left an indelible impression on his life. The daughter of the ruling family fell ill ; the father sent for the senior preceptor, the father of the poet, who was also a physician. He was unable to go ; instead, he deputed the son to do the job. The son obeyed and went to the house of the patient. He saw her, held her pulse in his hand and said, “All is well with those whose hand is in that of the teacher.” Her beauty bewitched him. He *rose*, not fell in love ! He claimed her hand in marriage ; his request was refused by the father, and then, as it has always been, Love turned him out of doors, so that the “tiger” within be tamed and the lover’s mettle tried, and his love ‘proven’. He left his hearth and home and wandered for years in the wilderness. All search was in vain till one day some one brought the news to the sorrow-stricken father that the son had been seen in the company of a party of people who wear the ochre-robe of poverty and penance. Where did they take him ? No one knows. But he seems to have travelled far and wide, otherwise he could not have acquired such a wide range of experience,—and the wisdom born of that experience,—as is reflected in his songs and stories. But as he wandered, he wondered, and as he wondered he cried in the anguish of his heart, “Where art Thou, the Wonderful One ? The lotus and the swan but brought to him the memory of the Beautiful Beloved

whom he had seen once in a vision, but who now seemed to be far away from him !

"The roots of the lotus in the bottom lie,  
The bee is a denizen of the skies.  
Glory to the love that them unites."

\* \* \*

"Deep within the deep is the abode of the swan,  
He fixed his eyes in the deep.  
Ah ! If thou wert to look with love  
At the swan but once.  
Never wouldst thou again live  
With the other birds."

He appears to have come into contact with a Master of Wisdom, whom he met, perhaps at Girnar or at Hinglaj, both of which were considered for centuries as centres of esoteric and occult training. Describing the Master, Shah says :

"The *yogi* came out from inside the abode of ecstasy,  
The master effulgent with the glory of the full moon.  
His fragrance suffused the earth,  
The face of the Master is as the sun at dawn,  
The turban on his head flashed as lightning on the clouds;  
He showed me the abode where the Exquisite One  
received illumination."

It must have been at the time of his initiation or realization that he uttered :

"Thanks to the Beloved that I have met Him face to face."

Perhaps, the 'word of power' he received was "Om", for he says in one place: "If the *guru* were to give thee the one curved word<sup>1</sup> it would be to thee as light in darkness : therefore keep *meem* in thy mind and place *aliph* before it."

"When walks my beloved, the Lord of grace,  
Earth cries *Bismillah*,<sup>2</sup>  
It kisses the track he makes.  
*Hours* stand enraptured, utterly amazed,  
I swear by my Master, the beauty of the Beloved is matchless."

There is one episode in his travels which cannot be omitted. One day in the hills, he heard the cry of some one in anguish. He tracked

1 The sacred sound *Om* when written in the Vedic script consists of a combination of curves, and when written in the Arabic script would begin with the letter *aliph* and end with *meem* (corresponding to the Roman *m*).

2 Meaning, Glory to the Lord !

the cry to its source, a cave in which a semi-conscious man was singing one of Shah's own verses, which he had heard sometime before from the lips of one of the wandering minstrels and which had led to his renouncing the world. The line was, "I shall now go all alone to the Beloved." Shah was surprised at this. The camel-man wanted Shah—whom he did not recognise—to recite to him, if he knew them, the remaining verses. Shah sang:

"There are high mountain passes and precipices sharp as the spear on the path.

But my sufferings and my yearning shall ever be my faithful companions on the journey in search of my Beloved."

No sooner did the camel-man hear these verses than he swooned and breathed his last. Shah consigned the dead body to the grave and to this day whenever any camel-man passes by this grave he stops for a moment to salute in silence the spirit of search for Truth symbolised in the camel-man. And Shah used to say regarding this lover, "I never yet saw a man as true and with such a burnt-up heart as this camel-man."

After having wandered in the worlds of Nature and of Man, the mystic-poet returned home, having realized the Beloved in his own heart.

"Look within, and see He is there."

\* \* \*

"The Beloved was born within the heart."

He had by now lost the aggressiveness of his individualism and found the rhythm of his life. He had been acquitted of the "heresy of separateness". To him, everything proclaimed God and His glory. He recognised his kinship with heaven as well as with his own home.

The parents of the girl understood the depth and dignity of his love for her and gave her hand to him in marriage. Thereafter they lived a dedicated life of service and of song, their children being, as he once said, the aspirants and the ascetics. He had drunk deep of the cup of love divine and become free and fearless. He could now never lose his way in the maze of the Many.

"Having drunk the wine of love, I now know the Beloved in all his amplitude.

The fire of love burns constantly in my heart, day and night."

He became one with the Beloved and all the knots in his life were loosened and cut open. He attained to cosmic love, cosmic

sympathy and cosmic understanding. He built bridges between himself and his many-aspected environs and many-faceted personality. He became a relative of the whole world:

“When one knows thee, then alien there is none,  
then no door is shut.” (*Gitanjali*).

The riddle was read, and the mystery resolved. How do these things come to pass? Who can tell? That they do in God's own good time and through His grace is but too true. But only when the right hour is struck. As Emerson says in his essay on “Spiritual Life”:

“God screens us evermore from premature ideas. Our eyes are holden that we cannot see things that stare us in the face, until the hour arrives, when the mind is ripened.—then we behold them, and the time when we saw them not is like a dream.”

In this screening one sees the mercy of God, not His partiality because He reveals Himself to the elect, nor His parsimony in not sharing His wisdom with all at once. For who but the brave could ever withstand the terrible meekness of the Master of the World and the dazzling light of the face of the Eternal Lover of us all?

So far the “evolution” of Shah Latif, the mystic, has been humbly attempted. But Shah Latif was a poet, too, as is amply testified by the several quotations I have given above. His songs, as also his stories, are in Sindhi. It is said that Shah Latif, whenever he was in a state of ecstasy, would burst forth into song, and one of the fellow-seekers sitting by, would take these down. The Poet was not aware of this transcription. But one day shortly before his death, the amanuensis brought out his collection and showed it to him. He straightway threw it into the water. The disciples began to weep and piteously appealed to him to let them have a record of his songs. He agreed and asked his favourite disciple, who knew most of his songs by heart, to begin singing and as he sang, an amanuensis transcribed them. The record was then shown to the poet, who approving of the same, said “This is my *nuskha*.” (The word *nuskha* means “prescription of a physician”, also “word”.) His song, as that of each true poet, including that of the Poet of all poets, is the “word made flesh”. This collection of poems is also called “Ganj”, meaning “treasure”, or “Rasalo”.

In his songs he sings of human love, of divine love,—to which human love is a stepping-stone—, of the beauty of Nature, of the



beauty of the Beloved, who is addressed now as a physician, who cures with his pinch of grace, now as a tavern-keeper who gives the cup only when the head is offered as a price, and again as a friend ; of the pilgrimage of pain ; and also occasionally he enshrines in them experiences of his several states of consciousness. Ever since Shah passed away in 1752, his songs have continued to be sung in the fullness of their hearts not only by the several scores of people living in Bhit Shah, every Thursday night till the small hours of the morning, but by thousands of people living in Sindh, who sing them daily ( and there has been not a single omission, so far as these Thursday vigils are concerned ). These songs, which are sung or chanted in various tunes such as *Kalyan*, *Yaman Kalyan*, *Khambhat*, etc., are called by Shah "*vai*", meaning a "statement or news", though they are popularly known as "*Kafi*".

Shah himself was a lover of music. He once said, "In my heart there is a tree of Divine Love which dries up unless I sing or listen to music. I am restless without it, but with it commune with the Creator." But all his songs are not lyrics, many of them are poems with a heavy dose of didacticism. The reason is obvious. Not to hurt the feelings of his father and also to help the masses to proceed on the path step by step, he had often to expound the traditional tenets of Sufism. A few specimens are given below :—

"Callest thou thyself a moth !  
Then turn not thy back at the sight of fire ;  
Ask of the moth, what it is to burn.  
Fire has burnt many,  
Burn thou this fire."

\* \* \*

"Rejoice ! rejoice !  
Ecstasy is with the eyes,  
There is no ecstasy without eyes.  
They have purchased joy  
And carry it with themselves.  
This state is beyond words ;  
Even if these eyes at a villain look,  
They see him as the Beloved."

\* \* \*

"See not with these, the eyes of flesh.  
The eyes never realized the Beloved by seeing.  
They who closed both the eyes, they saw Him.  
Take care. Oh Brother !

These fleshly eyes will entangle thee some day.  
Give not, therefore, up the bird of reality."

\* \* \*

"A needle to me is more than kingdoms worth.  
It clothes all the naked of the world.  
Itself alone it naked keeps."

\* \* \*

"They who accept the Cross  
As their wedding-bed,  
To them is the vision of God  
In Death."

\* \* \*

"They only should bear the sacred mark  
Who are faithful to their own heresy."

\* \* \*

"The birds, the beasts and the ants,  
Mistake them not as another's voice,  
By the Beloved, all this noise is His."

So far as his songs are concerned, it has to be remembered that, like one of the present-day poets of England, "his lyrical flame is not self-kindling, but needs the tinder of narrative". But the stories which he pressed into the service of his song were not his own creation. They were current among the people; he only adorned and interpreted; nay, illuminated them in the telling. Even to this day, every one knows the stories of Sasui and Punhu, Umar and Marui, Momul and Rano, Hir and Ranjhu, Suhini and Mehar and many others. There is a spiritual quality and also a selective process in his narrative, which make it "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever". A brief sketch of Suhini and Mehar will serve as an illustration.

In a certain city there lives a potter, named Tula. He has a daughter of peerless beauty, Suhini, whom Sachal (a younger contemporary of Shah) describes in one place in these words: "Others are born of their parents, but she was born of Love." She is a devout student of the *Koran*. One day a caravan of traders from Bokhara, headed by one Izat Beg, pitch their tent in the city where the potter dwells. He asks a servant to go to Tula and buy some earthen pots of exquisite workmanship. The servant obeys but when he returns to the camp he brings with him not only the pots, but also the news that the potter has a daughter of peerless beauty. From next day Izat Beg begins to go daily to the potter on the pretext of buying his pots. This continues for several days, during which time a secret and sacred love grows up between him and the maiden. Then when his whole wealth

is expended in purchasing pots he offers himself as a servant in the house of the potter, who employs him for tending his cattle. He gives Mehar as his name. Mehar takes the cattle to the other bank and as now and again he calls out to the creatures, Suhini hears his voice and prays in the shrine of her heart, "God, bless Mehar and the cattle." But how long can the fragrance of the rose be hid? The potter comes to hear of his servant's affection for his daughter and turns him out of doors, and to put an end to Suhini's madness he marries her to one, Dum, living in the neighbourhood, in spite of her protests that she has already plighted her troth to Mehar. Dum, too, fails to win her over to himself. But the die has been cast, and she must perforce live in the house of Dum. She, however, remains true to Mehar, whom she remembers hourly; and to give an edge and an intensity to her feeling of sensing vividly his presence, she passes her hand over the sleek-skinned cows and chats with them! Her companions tease her and twit her, but she minds them not. Afterwards every night with the help of a baked and burnt jar she swims to the other side and meets her Mehar. This continues for sometime when one day a companion, presumably her sister-in-law, suspecting something, makes a search one afternoon when Suhini is out, and finding a fully baked jar hidden in a corner of her house, replaces it by one the clay of which was not as yet burnt fully. The night comes. The river is in flood. Suhini goes to the bank with her jar. No sooner has she stepped into the water than she discovers that the jar is unbaked. The jar begins to give way. She throws it aside and saying, "Love needs no crutches," plunges into the river. She is caught in a whirlpool, cries, and calls out for Mehar, who hears her voice on the other bank but cannot move as he is lying wounded. He appeals to one or two people whom he sees near by to go and save his Suhini, but they decline as the storm spelt sure death. Then he plucks up courage and plunges into the river. Suhini and Mehar meet each other on the crest of a wave in the middle of the river, and the stars, being 'wonder-wounded', stop for a while in their courses, and seem to sing a requiem as the two lovers are lowered by the storm into the watery grave.

There are several such stories, all ending in tragedy. It is not, however, the story that matters in Shah but the scope that it gives to his lyrical genius, though students of Sufism attach great symbolic value to these tales.

## SELF-REALIZATION

Brij Lal Sharma

IN Vedanta man, at bottom, is one with the ultimate reality. The soul of man is identical with the soul of the universe ; the macrocosm lies mirrored within the microcosm. The light which shines within him is no mere spark but a blaze from which have shot forth, in the course of time, matter, life, mind and spirit. A universal reality underlies his nature, a reality which is one, eternal, changeless, infinite, knowledge, being and bliss. Yet evidently man is finite, ephemeral and full of woe. There waits for him, therefore, a great task of transcending his finitude and of abiding in eternal life which is his true nature. In other words, for Vedanta, the state, society and education have one and only one purpose : to bring about self-realization. Human efforts, whether in the sphere of science or art, literature, economics or politics, lose their dignity and worth if they are not directed towards the discovery and revealment of this inner reality. This is a comprehensive test and is to be applied to every situation in life.

Self-realization must be distinguished from the Greek exhortation "Know thyself". The former is not merely cognitive but affective and emotional as well, for it seeks to sound human personality at its deepest. Knowledge alone is not enough, it must transform life and become one with it. What man thirsts for is not contemplation, a passionless watching of the drama of existence, a mere monotony of an unbroken glimpse of reality, for all this simply tells us what *has* to be achieved without bringing about actual achievement, which alone brings light and ends all heartache ; but for a bold plunge into truth after it has been seen, for an incorruptible anguish which, satisfied by nought else but what is pure, pierces through all resistance, to that which fires its zeal and lights its direction. Self-realization is a comprehensive discipline and is to be directed to all the facets of human personality, to all our thoughts, feelings and actions. It is a long and tedious process like the burnishing of a copper vessel, but in it alone lies our hope. The self which is to be realized is not the ego, which baffles and blinds us with its impulse and partiality, but the self within whose universality enfolds all existence. The ego, with its ignorance, selfish actions and unholy desires, is being realized every

moment ; a further attempt to realize it would stir up all that is evil and destructive in the already none too harmonious life of man.

What then is the technique of self-realization ? How do we come to be in possession of this wealth which constitutes our real self ? It must be made plain at the outset that no man singly can hope to lay down guidance for all the situations in life, and even if he could, he would not be of much help, for his advice would be relevant to the situations he himself has passed through and not those which he has not experienced and which are still far in the future. It is enough if we can discover broad principles of conduct to govern and guide our attitude.

If the self is one, self-identical and indivisible, whatever helps to maintain this self-identity and oneness is of value. In human relations nothing does more to bring this about than love. For although in love the "other" is a necessary element, it does not confront us as something outside us, to which we may be indifferent, but as something inextricably interwoven with our own existence, as the very life of our life, the very soul of our soul. Distinction is necessary for love, but what it really emphasises is unity. In love two become one. Love admits duality, separateness, division and discord, but by its unifying, healing and composing nature, denies their ultimate reality. Not to love a man is to confess that he belongs to a different reality to what we do, that there stretches between him and ourselves a yawning chasm which cannot be bridged, that his self is not the one which is ours. Hatred throws into sharp relief the mutual exclusion of things and, flying in the face of Vedantic conception of life, makes self-realization impossible. The question why should we love our neighbour is answered by Vedanta : because he is our own self. Love baffles us with its stupendous faith, with its impossible hope, with its unflinching defiance of chance, mutability, disease, death and destruction. In the midst of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, it stands firm as a rock ; the storm of care and shattered hopes beats in vain on its bosom ; time, space, cause and other circumstances foam and swirl round it to dislodge it from its base without success. There is something awesome about Love, just as there is something awesome about faith in God. To believe in God, not necessarily a bearded one surrounded by angels in heaven, in the face of the stinging imperfections of the world, its vice, excess, injustice and violence, is to be guided by a most uncertain star, and it is this scorn of appearances and devotion to the unseen reality which

a devotee believes to be the foundation of the world, that leaves us dumbfounded. Of all gamblers, the religious devotee is the most daring. He stakes all he has, and loses without a tear or regret. Love opens our eyes to the perfect in the imperfect, to the pure in the impure, to the ideal in the actual. One who loves is not deterred by the dross that clings to the object of his love ; the outer which is dark and repulsive does not endure, what endures is the self within, pure, radiant and eternal. For love no person is mean or unworthy, though for thought he may be. Love thus sees the one in the many, the timeless in the midst of time. Sympathy, affection, kindness, benevolence and refusal to be hateful, cruel, unkind and indifferent, which are kindred sentiments of love, provide one and all a highway on which one may seek the unity of all things, which is self-realization.

Love of neighbour and personal love are apt to be a bit confusing. What is the content, the character of this love which we are exhorted to cultivate, and can love be cultivated ? To answer the second question first : love, of course, can be cultivated. True, in ordinary experience we find that we are naturally attracted towards some persons and repelled by others. But it is precisely these actions and reactions, affections and antipathies, which want governance. If man were wholly at the mercy of natural forces, ethical life would become a myth and we should be no more than objects among objects in the world. Love loses all meaning if it cannot be practised. As long as we are victims of likes and dislikes we do not see that we are treating persons as objects, that we have placed human beings on a par with lifeless things. It is only when we rise to the conception of love which is a profoundly personal relation that we are emancipated from the contemplation of persons as external objects incapable of responding to our advance. What is unnatural is hatred, not love. Love reveals things as they are, hatred as they are not.

Love changes with human relations. There is love between man and wife, between man and man which we call friendship, between father and son we call affection, and neighbour-love. We are not concerned with love which is dependent upon biological needs of its partners, but rather with the general personal relation which man's humanity makes possible. Certain features stand out in this relation. In the first place, it is founded on equality. It looks with equal eyes on everybody, irrespective of what he is or has done. Love knows no criminal, sinner or outcaste ; it frowns at none. In the second place,

every person for love is precious beyond description. There is no man or woman living who can be ignored. It will be said that this is impossible, no one can hope to love all the people in the world with whom one has never come in contact, for love is a supremely personal relation. This is true so far as it goes. We cannot love every living man and woman owing to the sheer impossibility of the task, but we can love those whom we have met. There is a danger in loving love. The only world for us is the world we know and come in contact with, and if in that world we allow hatred or indifference to take root, we are doomed. In the end love must be expressed in individual relations and, however universal the sentiment of love may be, unless it so expresses itself, it is a cheat and a failure. If in our daily world we deliberately use persons as means to ends or as insignificant and without value, we are not fulfilling this second requirement which demands that every person we know should be infinitely dear to us, since he is no other than our own self. We must delight in him, share his joys, admire his achievements, forgive and forget his weaknesses and failures, suffer with him in his sufferings, help to alleviate his pain, and serve him to our last resource. When we have done that we might be in a position to say that we saw no difference between him and ourselves, that to see him happy and prosperous brought us happiness and prosperity, that he indeed was one with our life, one with our self. The sense of equality and the realization of the spiritual significance of each individual are the necessary elements of love we are discussing. We must not only love the individual we meet but also those we do not meet ; the former gives us moral and spiritual strength, the latter expands our mental outlook. The universal quality of love must go hand in hand with its concrete expression in individual relations.

Love helps us to realize and maintain the unity of the self. Trust, trustworthiness and fidelity bring home to us its self-identity. <sup>1</sup> Trust and fidelity are complementary. We trust a person and are faithful to him. In the first case we repose trust in him, in the second case he reposes trust in us. In trust we expect something from the other party, in fidelity the other party expects something from us. Trust and trustworthiness thus constitute an integral whole. Trust thus has two aspects : on the one hand it stands fast in the goodness

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1. In what follows I have borrowed gratefully from Hartmann's masterly treatment of these values in his *Ethics*, E. T., Vol. ii, pp. 282-296.

of the other persons, on the other it believes that the goodness is no other than the goodness of our own real self. If we can trust ourselves, we should have no hesitation in trusting others, since they are not other than our own self. By trusting others we only trust ourselves, by distrusting them we stand divided against ourselves, for the reality which underlies all things is one and partless. In trust reality is affirmed, in distrust denied.

In fidelity, as we have remarked above, the position is reversed. Here it is the other party which expects us to fulfil the trust which it has placed in us. What is the psychology of faithfulness? Faithfulness is a promise by us, expressed or unexpressed, not to change, not to alter in the midst of flux. A word, an act, a sentiment, is in danger of being betrayed or overpowered. In faithfulness we promise to preserve the integrity of such a word, act or sentiment, even at the cost of our life, if need be. Further, such a promise implies that we ourselves shall remain self-identical in the process—else how could we make such a promise? If the guarantor keeps on changing, so that at any given moment it is difficult for us to decide who the guarantor is, the guarantee has a doubtful value. By promising and proving to be true to our word, we establish our selfsameness in change. Trustworthiness means that we can be depended upon, that though all else may change, we do not, so far as our word and disposition are concerned. It is our letter of credence, a proof that we neither break nor bend in any circumstance, it is our claim to immortality. The man who fulfills a promise is the same man who made it and between the two there stretches a period of time to which he, not physically or mentally but spiritually, has passed unscathed. It makes us see that there is after all something in us which does not fall under the sickle of time, as body and mind do, but endures and persists through change.

It is evident that social intercourse is made possible by these values. There is no human situation in which they are not present. Without them life would be chaos and society a dream. For they assert the one in the many, solidarity in the midst of division, harmony in the heart of discord. They weld the manifoldness of persons into a single interest.

Love reveals our unity with other fellow-beings, trust and trustworthiness reveal our-self identity. But these values often clash among themselves. There is loyalty to wife, friends, word, contract, nation, ideals, and even to one's own disposition. Personal love may



conflict with neighbour-love. Situations do arise in which several affections come into collision and we may be at a loss to know which one to betray and which one to serve. It is not here a fight between good and evil but between good and good. Higher goods challenge lower goods. It is obvious that in all such cases, higher considerations must supervene, and superior values must be chosen in preference to inferior ones. What is the test of the superiority of values? A love which establishes unity among a *larger* number of persons is to be preferred to one which unites a smaller number. The question is one of degree. Similarly trustworthiness and fidelity which reveal self-identity through a *longer* stretch of time are of more value than those which reveal it through a smaller period. That which preserves the unity and selfsameness of the self *more* is more valuable than that which preserves them less. Degree and kind are here one. Whatever helps us to maintain our self-identity through a longer duration also improves the quality of this self-identity, and whatever improves the quality of self-identity also enables it to endure longer.

But the universe contains not only the self but also the not-self, and no unity of the subject is complete unless it is a unity of the object as well. The division of subject and object therefore must be overcome to attain ultimate unity of all things. One way to realise it is through knowledge. In all knowledge there is a certain amount of fusing of subject and object. However inactive and external the subject or the object might seem, in cognition they stand undivided. To know a thing in Vedanta is to be it, and to be it is to be one with it. Knowledge arises when the mutual exclusion of subject and object is transcended. Unless an object becomes our own, unless, in addition to its existence out there, we create it for ourselves, so that we can play about with it without meeting resistance from it and penetrate into each and every part of it as we like, we do not understand its nature. To know a thing is to make it so completely coincide with our own self that there is no longer any division between us. This all-absorbing unity is not found in all knowledge. Hence all knowledge is not of equal value. In perception and inference and in all scientific knowledge the unity of subject and object remains partial throughout. It has to be, else it would not serve pragmatic purpose which is based on distinctions. Scientific knowledge is of great value compared with ignorance which, by keeping our minds in dark, leaves us helpless at the mercy of impulse, chance and superstition. By illuminating our mind, it helps us to see where we are. It states the

problem, and to know the problem correctly is to half solve it. Those who spurn science do commit a grievous error, for to reject science is to uphold the despotism of nescience. But to accept science is one thing, to accept it as the only means of perfect knowledge another. Science does not, let it be made quite plain, give us the highest truth. It is a stage in the journey, a necessary stage. To comprehend our unity with the universe we must go beyond science, with its help if it is possible, where subject and object become one and we see the world from within. The report which we receive of reality through perception and inference needs to become a vision in intuition.

The description of reality as one, infinite, eternal and the like, though intellectual, is based on experience which intellect tries to comprehend. This experience, though ineffable, fills us with the radiance of comprehension. It dispells darkness and doubt and is that light by knowing which all things are known. It is doubtful whether by experiencing unity we can know abstract mathematical relations and all the sciences without having studied them, but it does mean that here we see a vast, comprehensive principle which forms and supports all things, and not only see it but feel its impulse throbbing in us. This experience is above intellect, not below it. To enjoy it we must first undergo intellectual discipline although the latter is not enough. We must reflect and then cease reflecting. Over-reflection is a bane of life and is a long way from wisdom. In all reflection subject-object relation is necessarily present. Great intuitions have been revealed to men in moments of rest and quietude. This type of experience cannot be ordered at will nor forced through reflection. Intellectual knowledge must ripen into intuition and what we have seen through thought which breaks it up as a prism breaks up light, must be seen in its wholeness with ourselves as forming integral part of it.

Thought rides on our faith in the rationality and orderliness of the universe, without which it would be impotent indeed. Behind all our knowlege, empirical and scientific, there is the conviction that things can be known and understood, that our existence has some meaning, that the universe will cooperate with us in fulfilling this meaning. This profound faith, in which all thought and action is rooted, shows us that we already are conscious of that which transcends the distinction of subject and object. To help this faith is to quicken intuitive apprehension. How can we help it? By believing in unity instead of manifoldness, in cooperation and harmony rather than division and discord, in the underlying oneness of all

things rather than in their outward multiplicity and mutual exclusion. Experience tells us that everything is dependent upon everything else, that every yon has a beyond. In the dust and din of controversy, in the face of conflict, clash and contradiction, in spite of facts and data which we have reason to believe are false but which yet continue to confront us out there as supremely real, thought needs to continually remind itself of the transcendent unity of the world, of the overflowing sea of spirit which is infinite. Our vision must be so sure and steady that we never consciously cut adrift anything in thought from its spiritual moorings, that we never regard it as existing by and for itself in absolute solitude. This faith must be helped in a negative as well as a positive way. Negatively we must never doubt or do any thing by which it is likely to be weakened, injured or thwarted. There is no question here of crushing something which ought to find complete expression, for we see that this faith underlies all our seeing and doing. Self-realization does not level us down to the mass, it is not another name for standardisation, we do not barter in it our soul for a complex discipline ; it perfects our life into that excellence which is at the same time the most universal. Self-realization brings out our uniqueness. Positively, we must think, act and feel in harmony with this faith, building our mental discipline on its basis and infusing thought and perception with its inspiration. If we can understand the universe, in however superficial a degree, the universe cannot be absolutely different in nature from us. Here is a firm foundation for all thought.

Love, we said above, reveals the unity of self, knowledge the unity of subject and object. Now the I is opposed by not-I which embraces object as well persons. Love bridges the gulf between the I and persons, knowledge between the I and objects. But what is to effect the unity of the I on the one hand and persons and objects on the other ? Love as a personal relation is refused admittance into the heart of inanimate things ; knowledge as an impersonal relation stands outside animate feelings. The path which leads to this new unity lies through beauty, through adoring the loveliness and splendour of the whole universe, instead of any part of it. All values are perceived intuitively. Moral perceptions and æsthetic experience dawn on the mind by way of intuition. Intuitive apprehension knows no barriers. Love wins a peep into the heart because its path is intuitive. When we love a person, we see the unity of self, when we love persons and objects, the unity of all things is unfolded to us in

beauty. In æsthetic experience subject and object become one and the object is felt to be so precious that it seems to become a part and parcel of our life. It is impossible that we should judge a thing to be beautiful and not love it. If we do as in art criticism our judgment has, of course, practical value, but it has no æsthetic significance, for by applying certain standards and principles abstracted from beautiful objects to the object of art criticism, we divide ourselves from the object and are not fused with it in the unity of æsthetic delight. Beauty-judgments tend to be impersonal. When we judge an object as less beautiful we miss the full unity in which beauty takes its birth because of our practical prejudices. The need of life to live makes it selective and all selection in the end is arbitrary. We cannot behold the beauty of a thing if we approach it with reservations. Commonplace objects, which vainly seek to attract our eye, heart and mind, have filled poets and painters with ineffable joy. It is the completeness of our unity with the object, whether personal or impersonal, which determines the quality of its beauty. Poetry, music, literature, painting and the like, free us from the trammels of practical life which is a tyranny of distinctions. They bring to us a sense of freedom and expansiveness, movement and delight.

Aesthetic experience is valuable for self-realization, because it opens the springs of joy which is a mark of the real. Gladness is its own assurance. Reality that gladdens not our heart is no reality, instinctively we are repelled by it. To seek joy is to miss it, but if what we seek does not bring us joy, we have again missed what we seek. The happiest man, as has been said, may not be the best one, but the best man must be happy. Joy by maturing us into the self brings us satisfaction. It is a sign of self-realization. This is true even in the case of malicious pleasure, pleasure which loves to sting and hurt others. The difference, however, is that here the self which is satisfied is not the greater self in us which is one with the real, but our body or some prejudice of our individual self which seeks to maintain its own existence, even at the cost of the existence of others. The self which these pleasures assuage is a petty fraction and not the underlying whole in the realization of which alone lies peace and delight. It is the satisfaction of a part among parts, not the satisfaction of the whole which alone guarantees the existence and reality of the part. Joy depends upon our identity with the object, and its quality must vary with the depth and extent of this identification. If we select some objects

in the universe as a source of joy and pursue them even by denouncing and destroying other objects, our joy has an inferior quality indeed, for joy, we must remember, was to bring about our identity with the entire existence which we sought in vain through love and knowledge, but actually we have succeeded in attaining identity with an infinitesimal part. Pleasures must give way to higher delights and malicious joy to gladness which comes from fellowship with things, if the universal, not the individual, self in us is to be realized. We must not take delight in this thing and not in that, for in that too the ultimate reality lies concealed. For individual existence selection will have to be made, but this selection need not prevent us from cultivating a deeper attitude towards things, an attitude independent of space, time and other considerations.

Truth, love and delight supplement each other. Any one of them, if pursued deeply, leads of necessity to others. To know the truth is to be one with it and to be one with it is to delight in it. If we love without reservations, our hostility, which divides us from the world, ceases, and by attaining identity with it we not only see the truth but taste its delight. If a fine sensibility of sense, heart and mind could make universal appreciation of things possible, we should not only love everything but have an uninterrupted vision of reality as well. But experience so deep and profound is rare. None of them, therefore, must be pursued as a substitute for others. Instances are not wanting of great poets who turned out to be moral wrecks, of saints who propagated ugliness and sham, of philosophers and thinkers who were blind to moral heroism and beauty. We must not only strive after truth, but love all life and existence and delight in its beauty. All these three must melt into a single faith in which our body, sense, heart and mind must take root. Error must be gently replaced by truth, ugliness by beauty and discord by love. Pain, suffering and sorrow must be accepted without a word of complaint as portals to higher life ; the agony of failure must goad us towards success ; joy must mingle with service, freedom with restraint.



*By Rabindranath Tagore*



## THE EARLY BUDDHIST PROBLEM OF 'MAKING BECOME'

MRS. RHYS DAVIDS, D.LITT.

I HAVE written much these latter years about that nearly buried corner-stone of original Buddhism: 'becoming', as in each man a truer essential than 'being'. Apparently I have as yet been speaking mainly to the unhearing, and I need to write it over again. If this be held as unjustified, I can reply, that I bring with me fresh ammunition. This is in the results of a closer analysis of the emergence and growth, in the Hīnayāna or Pali Canon, of this or that form of the word 'becoming': forms of the stem *bhū*. Of these I will here limit myself to the causative form. And if I often go so far as to give my results numerically, let me hasten to say, (1) that these are only approximately exact, and (2) that I have usually counted each context as once only, even where the word in question is in the context repeated.

For the benefit of the reader who is not familiar with Indian tongues, let me say, that these have the happy advantage of expressing, by a simple lengthening of the stem-vowel, when it is required to state, not merely a doing, but the getting done or causing to be done. Thus, if friend Balbus of our old Latin primer does not merely make a wall, but has it made, he has only, in saying so, to use, not *karoti*, but *kāreti*. And if he wish, not to go himself, but to send some one, he can lengthen the stem *i*, 'to go', to *āy*, or *è*, 'to make go'. This may seem here of small account. It is anything but that. The evasion, by translators, of a faithful rendering of the causative in the verb 'become' is largely responsible for the blindness of students of early Buddhism to the significance of a feature in its history, revealed—as I think—by just this causative use of that verb. A literal rendering doubtless makes awkward English: 'make-become'; 'cause-to-become'. Hence the evasions; more about these elsewhere. Let my patient reader but follow me here to the end, and then judge whether the use of the form 'make-become' in the Pali Sayings is not trying to tell him something of historical importance.

In the first place the causative form of *bhū* is exceedingly rare in pre-Buddhistic literature. Open to correction, I do not see it in Vedas or Brāhmaṇas. It just emerges in early Upaniṣads and in the Mahābhārata.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Aitareya*, II, 4; *Bhagavadgītā*, III, 11,



Now let us come to the Pali Canon. I put aside the Rule-books (Vinaya) and the admittedly later Abhidhamma, and confine myself mainly to the Four Nikāyas.

### *The Dīgha-Nikāya*

In the first section, the Sīlakkhandha (Nos. I-XIII), I find no occurrence of the causative *with one exception*. This, as exceptional, needs to be considered. In the 8th. Suttanta, Gotama is reported as saying with emphasis, when clearing his reputation of the charge, that he condemned all asceticism (*tapas*), "If the ascetic habit be not accompanied by a 'making-become' a mind of amity, the votary to it could not be accounted as a true samāṇa or brahman" (let us say 'holy man'). The same is said of the culture of morals, intellect, wisdom.

Let us consider the isolation of this instance of the causative.

A little later in this Section there is another instance, and not alien to the former, of an isolated context. This is in the thirteenth, the last Suttanta. Here occurs, suddenly, but not previously, the formula of the Four Divine States (*brahmavihārā*), inculcating a teleolution of amity, pity, gladness and poise. I have reasoned elsewhere, that this points to an early-annexed cult, not of Sakyan (Buddhist) origin. This 'teleolution' brings in the three verbs: 'suffuse' (*pharati*), 'make-become', and 'pursue' (*āsevatī*). And it is just possible, that the annexed teaching, in the mouth of its own votaries, used the causative of 'become', when the early Buddhists had *not yet drawn up* the fourfold formula in their own terms, the first only of the four being here used.

Then again: in that eighth Suttanta, it is just possible, that more original versions (than the one we now have)—all of them oral only—may have been *equally well worded without the causative*, thus: If the votary of *tapas*, or of righteousness, etc., will not thereat and therein *become friendly* or more friendly, he is so far a sham. I do not think this is far-fetched. This First Section uses the indicative of 'become'<sup>2</sup> not seldom, and that in contexts where the causative would have been quite in place, had it been more idiomatic when the thirteen Suttantas were first compiled. For instance, in the same, the eighth, Saying, the conduct, whereby a man might open up the Four Channels (*apāyamukhāni*) to supreme knowing and doing, has at every turn 'becoming' used in the indicative, although the causative, expressing what he was intent to bring about, had fitted equally well, had it then been more idiomatic.

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<sup>2</sup> Especially the future tense.

And I suggest it as fairly possible, that (a) the exploiting of that remarkable brahman gospel and (b) the tendency to exploit the causative of 'become' were more or less contemporaneous accessions to the Sakya movement, and were, by the *mouth* of revising editors (later still by the *hand* of such) inserted into the First of the Dīgha Nikāya.

In the Second and Third Sections of the Nikāya the single occurrence is replaced by some seven to seventeen occurrences. And in the last Suttanta (No. 33), the causative gerund *bhāvetabba*, 'to be made become' takes its place as second among the ten ways in which 'things' (*dhammā*) are to be dealt with :

"Which one thing . . . two things etc. are to be made-to-become?" the exegesis paraphrasing by 'made to grow' (*vaḍḍhetabbā*).<sup>3</sup>

So far then we see the causative of 'become', starting like an intruder in the earlier part of a leading canonical work, well established as a term of religious technique at the close of the same. Nor does the verbal noun of the causative : *bhāvanā* : 'making-become', tell a different tale. This, with the indicative present *bhāveti*, and the past participle *bhāvita* form a strong feature in Sutta-compilation, and one that in some works shows increased usage. In the Dīgha's first section verbal noun and participle do not occur, nor is there any but a rare use made of them in the following sections, the increase being about 7 and 6 as compared with 2.

#### *Majjhima-Nikāya*

Here is both difference from and likeness to the Dīgha results. Taking the Piṭaka divisions: the Mūla Fifty, the Middle Fifty and the Extra Fifty *plus* two Suttas, we find on the one hand a somewhat more frequent use of the causative *throughout* than is the case in the Dīgha, and on the other, the same relative increase in Parts II and III as compared with Part I. Thus

in Part I II contexts of the causative of *bhū* ;

„ „	II	23	„	„	„
„ „	III	20	„	„	„

In saying 'causative' I include any such forms of the verb and also the verbal noun. Everywhere the causative, verb and noun, is used for those exercises of will (albeit for 'will' there was no fit word) wherein and whereby the votary was to make-become some function needing strengthening and growth, was to become what he was not before. Such as the seven parts of awakening (*bojjhanga*), the four stages in efficient will (*iddhi*).

<sup>3</sup> Or 'increase'.

With increase in use the causative is applied to a greater range of exercises ; thus 'making-become' is prescribed also for *jhāna* (i.e., musing, mainly for psychic experience, albeit the usual formula does not use the term) ; also for certain dispositions of mind (*citta*), for the four 'stations of mindfulness' ; the four 'right efforts', and other 'parts of enlightenment' (*bodhi*). The growing vogue in these exercises would seem to have gone hand in hand with increased use in the convenient causative verb. That which, as I think, was the older way of speaking : the *man* as becoming this or that seems to have been replaced by the 'monk' making become this or that *idea-about-himself*. Thus, in the Rāhulovāda-Sutta (No. 62) we get the forced stress *paṭhavīsamaṃ bhāvanam bhāvetu* etc. : "make-become the earth-like making-become". The older way—cf. next paragraph—would have been *paṭhavīsamo bhava* : "become like the earth !"

### *Saṃyutta-Nikāya*

Here, whereas the first section is mainly short poems (*Sagātha-vagga*), the causative of becoming emerges from the first. The admonishing friend from the next world asks among the earliest items :

'How many things should one make further to become?'<sup>4</sup>

and again :

'Making thought and wisdom become. . . .'<sup>5</sup>

We even see in the same section the monastic technical term *animittaṃ*, i.e. absence of 'sign', namely of permanence, happiness, self, as to be 'made become' :

*animittaṃ ca bhāvehi. . . .*<sup>6</sup>

as well as others : *sammādiṭṭhi* (right view) and *bodhi* (enlightenment).<sup>7</sup>

No increase in the use of the causative appears in any of the remaining 55 sections until we come to the last 12, grouped under the 'Great Section' (P.T.S.ed. vol. V). Here however a marked change appears, an increase of 'make-become' contexts quite out of proportion to the relative bulk of these 12 sections ; the causative forms, verb and noun, amount to 72 contexts. The reason seems here also to be, that the subjects are mainly those features, functions or aspects of the man which it behoves him in his training for religious perfection to 'make become.' We of today might call this 'to create', or be self-creative. As I have said elsewhere<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> S. i, 13.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.* 188.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.* 88, 103.

<sup>8</sup> *The Milinda Questions.*

this word was at hand, had the teachers thought well to use it. But they did not, and we do well not to force it in. In a gospel based, as was original 'Buddhism', on the lofty concept of the 'man', as accepted in its day, man had no need to 'create' or even recreate himself. His one central need was to grow up into or up to, or to become That Who he potentially was. His it was to evolve, to develop. Here again, the word was apparently to had: *vivaṭṭati*. We do find it, as in the wise poem of the first Saṃyutta section on the futility of war:

'Thus by the evolution of the deed (*kamma-vivaṭṭeṇa*)

a man who spoils is spoiled in his turn.'<sup>9</sup>

And it is used for alternating world-cycles, such as Leibniz called involution and evolution. Again, *vaṭṭati* and *saṃvaṭṭati* often occur meaning 'behoves one to do', or 'conduces towards'. Nevertheless the word *vaṭṭai* with its prefixes is not, so far as I know, used to mean that spiritual growth or becoming in the very man or soul, the instant and incumbent need of which it is the chief glory of Buddhism to have originally taught.

As to the verbal noun *bhāvanā*, this too is found in the First section, if only once:

*yesaṃ divā ca ratto ca bhāvanāya rato mano,*

'for them whose mind day and night delights in making-become.'<sup>10</sup>

It too in the following sections remains a rare visitant, leaping up also to 24 occurrences in the Mahāvagga.

#### *Anguttara-Nikāya*

Lastly, what has this Collection to report?

Here, for no apparent reason, we find no slow beginning of emergence of the causative, followed by a sudden increase. There is on the contrary a fairly even distribution of the causative, verb and noun, of 'becoming', accompanied by some irregularities of occurrence. It will save many words if I present results in a table:

Anguttara	Nipātas					
	I-III	IV	V-VI	VII-IX	X-XI	
<i>Bhāveti</i> (all finite forms)	... 14	7	9	8	0	
<i>Bhū</i> -participles (causative)	... 8	4	9	9	8	
Gerund ( <i>bhāvetabba</i> )	... 3	0	4	7	4	
Verbal noun ( <i>bhāvanā</i> )	... 4	3	5	4	1	
Total	... 29	14	27	28	13	

<sup>9</sup> *Saṃyutta*, i, 85. Geiger's rendering is "durch Umkehrung des Tuns".

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.* i, 48.

Can anything here be concluded respecting the history of the *bhū-causative*?

Few things, in the compilation of this Collection, are so safely to be affirmed as the evidence, that each *Nipāta*, or numerical section, was completed in its turn, and not reopened to admit later incoming of titular material. As I have said elsewhere, between the completion of the Fourth *Nipāta* and that of the Ninth, the exercise-formulas known as the four stations of mindfulness and the four right efforts had come to be drawn up and ranked of importance, especially the former. But they are omitted from the Fours and inserted—inserted, that is as titular—under the Nines, where, to make up Nine, this or that category of Five is brought in to make up the requisite number Nine.

Yet in the table above, this time-element, which seemed to be also apparent in a growing vogue of causative usage, is blurred, not to say reversed. Between *Nipāta* I and XI we see either a waning of that usage, or one that is fairly stationary.

To some extent we may, in its falling away in the last *Nipātas*, find explanation in their contents. Where these are categories of prescribed procedure, the object is mainly of elaborated *samādhi* or concentration, somehow less associated with deliberate will-departures for which the 'making become' is used. Again, the layman comes to the front, asking how he should live, he who had time before him, with less pressure brought on him to make a short-cut out of life. Lastly, some twos and threes are swept into these longer numbers of items, not, it may be, held worth building up as in the case of the Nines.

At the same time this does not sufficiently account for the contrast between the use of *bhāveti* and all finite inflections in *Nipātas* I-III, with none in X, XI, or for the absence of the gerund *bhāvetabba* in *Nipāta* IV alone. I have at present no certain solution to offer. Just where we should expect to find a relatively steady increase in contexts with the *bhū-causatives*, such as is on the whole suggested by the other three *Nikāyas*, we find nothing of the sort.

I incline to the hypothesis, that some residual explanation may lie in editorial work, busy over the lists of affirmations and of subjects for study with which the first two *Nipātas* are largely filled. I venture to suggest, that where, in the Sayings the term *bhava-pāriṇipūrī* (perfection of becoming) was uttered, editors changed this to *bhāvanā-pāriṇipūrī*, 'making-become-perfection', and that where the twin terms *bhūta bāhulikata* (become, increased) were uttered, the newer form *bhāvita* (made-become) *bāhulikata* was held preferable. That, again, where are the many repetitions of 'making-become' (*bhāveti*) of *kaṣiṇas* (musing-objects), ideas

(*saññā*), recollection (*anussati*), spiritual faculties or 'strengths' (*indriya*, *bala*) and the four divine moods, the new and 'fashionable' term was made to replace other older usages, such as *āsevali* (pursue, exercise) or the verbal noun of the exercise with the discarded word *bhavati*, 'becomes', thus, *āsubhasaññī bhavati*: 'becomes one who is mindful of things as foul'.

This is not the wild guess-work it may seem to some. But it demands that I spend a few minutes in showing that it holds water.

The causative forms 'makes become' (*bhāveli*) and 'making become' (*bhāvanā*) first make their appearance in a long Sutta at the end of the Nipāta of the Ones. That appearance is worth noticing. The preceding Sutta called Appamattaka (momentary) is second in a group of supplementary Sayings to the Suttas properly to be called the 'Ones'. These finish with the description of Makkhali, a well-known teacher, of whom no more here. The supplement then begins, with no reference to any one thing to be described, but with a contrast between two things, namely, wrong and right exposition of doctrine. This contrast is stated in four pairs. We then start abruptly on a list of things introduced with similes (*seyyathāpi*: 'just as'), continued into the next Sutta, which actually begins here. And note, that the first group of similes shows up a *violent and unprecedented repulsion from 'becoming' (bhava)*. In this Digha-Nikāya (ii) we find one man wishing another well with the words: *vādehi: bhavam hotu, māṇavaṃ*: tell the gentleman I wish him good luck—the Commentary<sup>11</sup> paraphrasing with *vuddhi*: growth or increase. But here nothing is too filthy with which to compare 'becoming'. Next, other matters are compared, as violently differing in proportion of number. Incidentally we have the verbal noun used with 'become' mentioned above, 'we shall become acquirers of the essence of the Aim, of Dhamma, of liberty' (*lābhino bhavissāma*). Here it is the 'man' who will become; it is not the 'quality of', or 'idea about' the man which is to be 'made-to-become.'

Now to review what we have just got.

- (1) something *suggesting* an appendix tacked on to the end of the Ones.
- (2) something *beginning* quite abruptly with a violent attack on 'becoming'.
- (3) something *showing* a sudden emergence of the causative forms of *bhū*, i.e., with, not becoming, but making-become.

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<sup>11</sup> *Bhavam atthu bhavantaṃ Jotipālan ti . . . bhavo vuddhi visesādhigamo sabba-kalyāṇaṃ ceva maṅgalaṃ ca hotū ti attho.*

And my conclusion is, that here we have editors of a later date, busy to establish by insertion in an earlier collection of Sayings, a certain change in religious values belonging to their own time. A certain value had been damned ; another value had to be maintained. The first value lay in the term *bhava*, becoming ; the second value lay in the *traditional* importance in their cult of the 'man' as more than just 'being'. His it was, so India ever upheld, to 'come-to-know' and realize the 'That', the Deity in his own nature. And even if there was a blight come over *bhava* 'becoming', a possible substitute lay in *bhāv-*. In the idea 'make-become', progress in knowledge and in realization suffered no set-back.

No context confirms this hypothesis. Scriptures tell not of what is going on so much as of what is done. But let it be remembered, that in the Piṭakas we have implicit the story of a literary diction : Pali, coming into being (as literary English did) on a basis of dialects, namely, of Prakrit dialects ; and as that diction grew under the studies of a monastic corporation (this becoming less active in missionizing, more sedentary), the new diction would develop grammatically, derivatives from archaic form being found both useful and plausible.

Why, then arises the obvious question, why and how should such a change in these values have come about ? What had happened to 'damn' *bhava* ?

This I have set out elsewhere, but it needs retelling. And let it not be forgotten, that 50 years ago a great number of thoughtful pious folk among us were 'damning' the word 'evolution'. I can remember it vividly. The term has found acceptance in general, and the condemners condemned, albeit where the right was on their side is perhaps not discerned. Namely, that the votaries of the new emphases, in the 'descent' or 'ascent' of man, lost sight of the 'man' in their preoccupation with the evolution of his body and associated psychophysical activities. They saw only a complex of these in the term 'man'.

Now the Buddhist Sangha, or 'church' of monks also came gradually to see only a complex, *where had been, for them too*, the 'man' or self, who was experiencer (*vedako*) and maker (*kattā, kārako*) in a body by a mind. Body, mind had their way of 'becoming', the essence of which was a process of change : growth, then maturity, then decay ; essential impermanence, or *anicca*. But the 'man' :—no ! India had said ; for him there lay ahead of him his own kind of becoming : he was to 'become Brahman', that is, he would eventually become actually That who he was, and always was, potentially. Now the Sangha, in rejecting at first the preoccupations of the current cults with external observances, came to include in their rejections this most vital and central teaching also. And

the only *bhava* they saw was the becoming of the mere complex that the man came for them to be. Namely, 'he' was born, grew up, grew ill, grew old and died, only to be reborn as a new complex with the same outlook—the same, be it noted, in whatever place in the universe he began afresh. The great remedy for this was so to live here as to cheat the future of all these futile 'becomings'. This could be done only by training; 'thus must you train yourselves': no refrain is so constant as this throughout the Sayings. It is true that, by their changed values about the 'man', it was only this last complex that could be trained; yet their belief was, that a well-trained complex would result hereafter in no new complex.

It may be said: all this would not necessarily 'damn' the word 'become'; the 'training' after all was a becoming. I agree; something more is needed to make rational the preferring *bhāv-*, the causative to *bhav-*, the more direct. And I find it in an accident, shall I say? of the slowly forming Pali diction, into which the standardized Sayings were gradually getting converted. The original mission gospel of Buddhism was strongly what we now call spiritualistic. It had brought the fact of other worlds, other lives very near, in that it made all lives just stages in the great Road of Becoming, ever more, (*bhīyyobhāva*, it was called: more-becoming) on the way toward the Highest (*agga*). Hence there was need for such a word as we have in 'lives'. But the new diction included no word for life in the plural. *Jīvita* was just 'living', used only in the singular. 'Lives' had to be called first 'dwellings' (*nivāsā*), and later 'births' (*jātiyo*). Or 'becomings': *bhavā*. Oddly enough too, the use of 'world' in the plural was not the earlier idiom. I have found it but once as yet in the Suttas, when for 'worlds' there are many phrases, apparently seeking to avoid the plural;<sup>12</sup> much as we might avoid speaking of 'universes'. But here again 'becomings' meant worlds as well as lives, places wherein to live.

Now since, for the monk, 'life' as being of a complex only had become a mighty poor thing—since he had testified to this opinion by renouncing the world here to which this present complex belonged—it followed as a matter of course, that the word by which he called the what and the where of the complex 'becomings', i.e. lives, worlds, came to be rated very low. Nothing was too bad to say about just that heavily laden word *bhava*. And not only when in many compounds it was scouted, as in *bhava-taṇhā*: (thirst), *bhav'āsava* (canker), and so on for many such, where, as is usual, the prefix may be a plural in singular form. The

<sup>12</sup> E.g. *sahassilokadhātu*, *loko sadcako samārako sabrahmako*, etc.



singular is no less scouted, as in the similes of odium quoted above, or in the Formula of Conditioned Things, where 'becoming' stands between 'grasping' and 'birth' as a link in the uprising of Ill.

Let me remind the reader here, that, if *bhava*, in its conventional sense of growth, progress, the better, luck, prosperity, had to go, there was no corresponding need to banish the indicative of the verb at the same time. With this in the Nikāyas I propose to deal also, but not here. I believe that *bhavati* always meant more than just *atthi*, 'to be'; it was opposed to *parihāyati*, 'to fail, fall away, decay'. And, even for that 'man-in-the-less', the complex of body and mind, this was not deemed desirable. No, it was the use of *bhava* for recurrence of lives and worlds that made the monastic body seek to throw blame on it where it seemed called for, and, as I incline to believe, substitute the word *vuddhi*, where blame was impossible. The reader may not know, how often, in the Sayings, *vuddhi* is used in contrast with *parihāni*, 'decay'. But *vuddhi* was hardly a spiritual term; it was too closely connected with the body and the world for that. And I dare to say, that it was substituted none the less, first because *bhava* was discredited, secondly, because the verbal causative noun *bhāvanā* was, that is, became, exclusively connected with spiritual exercises of 'making-become'. It is still so used; and it is nearly always translated by 'meditation', a word which does not accurately render it, and which has helped to keep the outside world in ignorance of the evolution in values which I have tried here to depict.



*By Rabindranath Tagore*



## “EACH IS I”\*

H. W. Nevinson

TIRED of his daily rounds in a Northern manufacturing town, Dr Barton appointed a *locum* during his absence, and set off for a brief holiday, seeking only solitude and mental peace. He fixed upon the island of Skye as his resting place because its outline on the map looked varied, and no towns of any size were marked on it. He knew that in June few sportsmen would distract the silence by proclaiming their prowess on moor or stream, and he found the word “Inn” marked at the end of a fairly remote inlet of the sea among the mountains.

“After all,” he thought, “I agree with old Dr Johnson that even the best scenery is improved by a hotel in the foreground, and I am too middle-aged and sophisticated to sleep in the open.”

A day-and-night’s journey took him through Highland places, the very names of which had once stirred his youth to romantic excitement, and with a melancholy pleasure he recalled the fragments of history and ballad that had transfigured the whole land for him.

“It is strange,” he thought, “that the genius of Scott and Burns should have converted the ancient hostility of English people like me into a passionate admiration and envy of the Highlanders such as we do not feel for our own country people.”

In the morning he reached the Kyle of Lochalsh, where a little ferry took him over to the island of Skye itself. A long drive beside the shore led to the narrow loch where, at its very end, surrounded by mountains and desolate moorland, stood the small house he had seen marked “inn”. Here at last he felt secure of solitude and peace. The people of the inn spoke Gaelic among themselves. Now and then a mountain sheep bleated in the distance, but the unknown language of men and animals hardly broke the silence, just as incomprehensible modern music hardly breaks the interest of reading or conversation.

Having strolled across a long bridge and some distance up the stream that sprang from the Coollin mountains, Dr Barton settled down to his meat tea with a sense of restful satisfaction.

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excitement. "That makes no difference to me. But do you call it trivial for a Minister of God to stand up in the pulpit telling his people not to commit adultery, and all the time he is committing adultery in his heart with a woman sitting just in front of him beside her husband ? If thine eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee !"

"But surely you could divert your eye and look at someone else," the doctor urged.

"When she was there, no one else seemed there," cried the stranger. "She was incomparable. She was like Bathsheba when King David saw her bathing beside the pool. Just with the memory of her beauty I have committed adultery with her in my heart every day and night. O wretched man that I am ! Who will deliver me from the body of this death ? Divert my eyes indeed ! I would tear them out. It is more profitable for me that my eyes should perish, and not that my whole body should be cast into hell !"

"This is a not uncommon case of sex-suppression," the doctor reflected inwardly. "I have known a kind of madness superinduced by it. What remedy can I prescribe ?"

"In your position," he said, rather shyly, "most men would go to a large city, look out for the nicest girl that offered and stay with her for a week-end. Your present malady would then be allayed at least for a time. It was a mistake to come to a desolate and thinly-inhabited island like this. It is true that, in the hope of subduing what they called the flesh, the early Anchorites wandered away into deserts. They lived in caves and holes of the rock. They sat on ledges of precipice, or on the capitals of solitary columns. They scourged themselves. Even in these days I have known apparently sane priests scourge themselves till the blood ran. But, speaking as a medical man, I doubt if they did their souls much good, or subdued the temptations of the flesh. Perhaps they only induced temptations in less natural forms. Prison doctors have told me this is one of their chief difficulties, though they try bromide and all manner of sedatives."

"Sin works in me all manner of concupiscence," cried the stranger. "What I would, that I do not, but what I hate, that I do. I find a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me. I came to Skye because it is the ancient home of my forefathers' ghosts, and I thought perhaps they would help me."

"Even for me," said the doctor with some relief, "even for me, a Southerner, the island is haunted. I think of Flora and her bonnie

Prince, and of old Dr Johnson and his Boswell, and of old Carlyle walking up and down the beach out there, tormented by cerebral dyspepsia, which probably a dose of bismuth would have relieved."

The young man paid no attention to these merely historic allusions, but remarked, "Did you ever hear the verse?—

'But I have dreamed a dreary dream  
Beyond the Isle of Skye,  
I saw a dead man win a fight,  
And I think that man was I!'

"Yes," said the doctor, feeling himself now on safe and impersonal ground. "I did find that verse in an old version of *Otterbourne*. An exquisite poet of our own time had a similar idea when, thinking of the bloody invasion of our British Celts by the so-called Saxons, he wrote:—

'Here the truceless armies yet  
Trample, rolled in blood and sweat ;  
They kill and kill, and never die ;  
And I think that each is I!'

"There you find perfectly expressed the scientific fact of double personality. I have known patients in whom the division was so sharp that they really became different personalities in succession. In fact the succession was sometimes so rapid as to be almost simultaneous. The modern psychologists are wrong in speaking of double personality. Rather than double, a personality is, may be, multitudinous. No wonder that the multitudes are continually at war with one another, like the nations of Europe. One of the earliest Christian writers perceived the double forces when he said, 'The flesh warreth against the spirit.' But he limited the two sides too narrowly. The forces are all bound together like a corn-shock tied round with a wisp of straw, which, in a human being, may be called the Self."

"You are acquainted with Paul to the Romans?" asked the young man.

"I read this part of his writings fairly recently," said the doctor. "It put a great strain upon my intelligence. It was so confused and illogical as to be almost unintelligible. What must Roman readers have thought of it in the very age of their greatest writers—Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Tacitus, Juvenal and the rest? The marvel is that it should have been preserved for all these centuries, apparently in the original and authentic form. St. Paul was a shocking bad writer, except for a few passages of real eloquence. But one must make allow-

ance for haste. He seems to have jotted down his thoughts almost at random as they rushed through his fermenting brain, while a messenger was waiting to carry off his tablets or strips of papyrus or whatever else he used, like an office-boy waiting to carry off the leader-copy on a daily paper."

"Being inspired of God," the stranger replied, "whatever he wrote must be true. To be carnally minded, he wrote, is death. They that are in the flesh cannot see God."

"Having a double nature, as we admitted," objected the doctor, "you seem inclined always toward the darker side."

"I see another law in my members," continued the stranger with further memories of St. Paul, "warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am," he cried again, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

"I believe," said the doctor, kindly, "that the Roman Catholic form of Christianity would advise confession in such a case as yours. In many of my patients I have found them gain a sense of relief in talking about their ailments, which they are seldom unwilling to do. So, too, the secret of the Salvation Army and this new so-called Oxford movement lies in the benefit of inducing would-be converts to speak freely about their sins—a method discovered long ago by the Early Fathers."

"No man can go surety for his brother," said the stranger. "I must tread the winepress alone."

"I think," said the doctor, "that in that very Epistle we were speaking about, you will find it written that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God."

"Forty million black sins," replied the stranger, "will not make my sin white. If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, and it is also written, 'He that is dead is freed from sin.' Having lived after the flesh, I am dead already, but yet I am not freed from sin. Day and night I sin, with groanings that cannot be uttered."

"My dear young man," said the doctor, taking his hand, "You have no need to think of death. I have seldom seen so fine and healthy a specimen of youthful manhood."

"It is the death of my immortal soul that I fear," said the stranger and went out silently. The doctor heard him open the front door and quietly close it.

"Mental, beyond doubt," he thought to himself, as he ordered

biscuits and a whisky-and-soda to make him sleep. "The poor fellow would be more at home in the middle of the seventeenth century than in these unbelieving days. Few take the Bible literally now, and the young have escaped a lot of misery by the change since I was a boy. But still, those various books, so loosely stitched together, and for centuries regarded as more sacred than all other literature, however superior in reality the others might be, have certainly conduced to a higher standard of thought and feeling. After all, we owe a great deal to the Jews. But where is the peace and solitude that I sought?"

He had not been asleep more than an hour or two when there came an excited knocking at the door, and someone cried; "If you please, doctor, would you kindly come and view a corpse?"

"Mental, and easily certified," grumbled the doctor as he hurried on his clothes, and followed the shepherd of the inn, who carried a storm-lantern. "To what amazing freaks the instinct for reproduction drives us! I suppose it comes from a subconscious longing for immortality—even for a vicarious immortality in the family."

"It was just along this bit of glen," said the shepherd; "I was coming up here to look after a ewe that's been late in her lambing, and I heard a kind of groan just like a ghost's, and there in the heather beside the track I saw a corpse lying, face downward. So I just turned the lantern on it and gave it a kick to make sure. But it said nothing, as was natural in a corpse, and I took a kind of fright and ran back to fetch you, hearing you are a doctor. It must be lying somewhere hereabouts."

He waved the lantern all round the place, but no corpse was to be seen.

"That's a queer thing," he said. "All this glen is queer. Some nights you can hear a clashing of swords and iron shields, but by daylight there's no trace of any battling."

"There's no trace of blood about," said the doctor. "May be the body you saw was only a rock or a heap of turf."

"Turfs don't groan, and rock isn't soft to kick," answered the shepherd, and for a long time they continued their search before returning to the inn.

"Strange!" thought the doctor as he got into bed again. "Love-sick or love-mad for a female he has never touched or made love to, and whose beauty he only guessed through her clothes. Thank heaven, I've often done better than that!"

Next morning all the household were gathered round the inn



door, marvelling over what the shepherd had told them about a corpse that had vanished suddenly like a ghost. But, to Doctor Barton's intense relief, the kilted Minister appeared as suddenly among them, and they set to asking him in Gaelic whether he had come down the glen and seen a corpse lying anywhere.

"I am the corpse," he answered, and sat down to breakfast opposite the doctor, eating again like a famished wolf.

"An abnormal appetite," thought the doctor, "is often a symptom of mental distress. Food replenishes the nerves exhausted by thought or grief. That is the reason of sherry and sandwiches after a funeral. The advertised medicines for restoring the appetite cannot compare with melancholy. If only I could invent a good advertisement for grief as a restorative, I'd make a fortune."

After saying good morning, and taking a rapid glance at the young man for scientific reasons, he assumed an everyday cheerfulness such as we often assume to recover from an outburst of intimacy the evening before.

"Fine morning for a walk !" he said. "Are you going far to-day ? I suppose you will be continuing your retreat. Retreat is often the best strategy. Xenophon and Sir John Moore are remembered mainly for retreat, and Napoleon's greatest mistake was delaying his retreat from Moscow too long."

"I'm going back," replied the Minister quietly.

"That shows a gallant spirit," said the doctor, much pleased.

"I saw a dead man win a fight, and I knew that man was I," the young man quoted. "Resist the devil and he shall flee from you."

"I believe the Hound of Heaven has been pursuing you !" cried the doctor, remembering the religious poem.

"And the Hound of Hell," answered the young man, "seeing there are two of me."

He just said goodbye, and without another word slung on his little haversack and stalked quickly down the path to the main road.

"That's a queer fellow," said the doctor to the woman of the inn.

"Aye," she answered, "he may seem a bit queer to the likes of you and me, but he's a wonderful preacher, as I was saying to you before. And what a braw lad to look upon ! I know there's many a young girl would just love to cuddle up close against him. I was a young girl once myself, and I know what feelings are. I never charged him for his bed, seeing he never slept in it."

## THE CONCEPTION OF THE EAST IN CLASSICAL EUROPEAN ART

Hermann Goetz, Ph.D.

THE irritating character of many relations between the East and the West is due to the fact that many people do not realize how many misunderstandings must arise between persons who have an insufficient knowledge of each other, and how many difficulties had to be overcome until even the present state of mutual understanding could be reached. The consciousness of the slow, but continuous growth of this knowledge will, however, contribute to teach them more patience and indulgence towards each other. One of the most important mediums for the spread of this knowledge of the East in the Western countries, or of the European world in the Orient, was Art, as it could be understood by everyone, being accessible to everybody. Especially in the classic age of Western art which emerged from the heyday of the Middle Ages and ended with the ascendancy of modern thought at the end of the 17th century, the works of the great painters have played an important part in shaping the popular conceptions and ideas about the East.

During the early Middle Ages the European peoples had not yet arrived at any clearly defined conception of foreign countries and civilisations. Outside the area with which they were more or less acquainted, the world was full of "miracles". Where the influence of Christianity ended, there demons and devils, dragons and all the fabulous beings of antique and primitive Nordic imagination prevailed. The only known non-Christian civilisation was Islam, but it was felt rather as an infernal counterpart of the European civilisation. A suchlike conception was to a certain degree justified because, during the early Middle Ages, Western, Byzantine and Arabian civilisations did not differ very much; they all were more or less Orientalized offshoots of the late Antique culture, and their differentiation did not become very apparent before the Near East came under the influence of Central Asia and China through the invasion of the Mongols, and the West under that of rediscovered Antiquity. The conception of the East as a group of civilisations of its own, therefore, got hold on the Western mind when about 1300 A.D. it first came in contact with a great culture of a completely different type. This was the Far East

under the Yuan Dynasty which was opened to Western merchants and missionaries by the foundation of the enormous empire of Chinghis Khan reaching from the Japanese seas to the German duchies in Silesia and Austria and the Genoese colonies on the shores of the Black Sea. Brief as this contact was, it did suffice to bring about a complete change in the Western attitude towards foreign civilisations. We have some very curious documents of this early intercourse between the Far East and the West. In the "Martyrdom of the Franciscan monks at Ceuta" painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Church S. Francisco in Siena (1330 A.D.) several Chinese civilians and soldiers are represented in a very realistic manner. Another painting, the "Ecclesia Militans" by Andrea da Firenze in the Chapel of the Spaniards in Santa Maria Novella at Florence (1355 A.D.) shows us not only Chinese, but also people from Eastern Turkestan. There are other drawings by Simone Mariani and—somewhat later—by Antonio Pisano representing Mongolian soldiers, perhaps from the territory of the Golden Horde in Southern Russia who in the 15th century were also among the mercenaries of the Byzantine emperors. How close this contact with the East must have been is obvious from the many Chinese and Buddhist features apparent in the style and composition of Italian paintings of the Sienese school. But with the end of the Mongol Empire of the Il-Khans in Persia this Far-Eastern influence in Western art came to an end.

Interest in the East was, however, aroused. It is true, isolated representations of types from the Near East are apparent in Italian art as early as the 10th century whither they had been introduced from Byzantine art since the reign of Basilios I. Suchlike scenes are to be found for instance in the mosaics of Monreale, Palermo, Florence (Baptisterium), Torcello, Venice (San Marco), Rome (San Tomaso in Formis). But it is not before the revival of Italian painting about 1300 A.D. that a real study of the peoples of the East set in, whom the merchants of Venice, Genoa, Florence met in Syria, Egypt, Northern Africa or Constantinople, as well as in their own ports. The great reformers of Florentine and Sienese pictorial art, Giotto and Duccio, have been also the first to introduce extraordinarily well-observed oriental figures in their works. No better representations of 14th century Egyptians could be found than that of Giotto's "Saint Francis before the Sultan" in the Upper Church of Assisi. All the peoples of the Near East—Arabian Beduins, Egyptians, Syrians, Iraqians, North African Berbers, Nubians, Negroes—are to be seen in the pictures

of Cimabue, Giotto, Duccio, Simone Martini, Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Taddeo Gaddi, Niccolo de Pietro Gerini, Lorenzo Monaco and others. Of course, the exactness of these representations varies very much in the measure the artists were able to study actual Muhammedans or had to copy the works of other masters. As, however, the latter were more and more excluded from the Italian cities, the theme lost more and more of interest and was finally dropped.

The decline and fall of the Byzantine Empire in the 15th century, however, revived the interest of the Western world in the East almost as much as in the times of the Crusades. Indeed, the defence of the Christian faith against the progress of Islam was preached in all the churches of Europe, and the armies were sent out to support the Greeks against the Turkish Sultans. Muhammedans became, therefore, a favourite theme of art, not, however, in historical scenes which are very rare, but in ecclesiastical pictures where they had to impersonate all persons hostile to the Christian religion, Babylonian or Egyptian kings prosecuting the Jews, Jews crucifying the Christ, Roman and other heathen princes slaying and torturing the martyrs. As at this very time interest in ancient Greek and Roman civilisation was in the ascendant, but as an exact knowledge of these latter was not yet acquired, the contemporary Greek civilisation of Byzantium, of the "Eastern Roman Empire" (called Rum by the Muhammedans) was adopted as a model also for themes from ancient history and literature. But in the 15th century Byzantine dress scarcely differed from that of the other Eastern countries, because since many centuries the militia of this state had consisted of foreign mercenaries of Iranian or Tatar extraction and the court had taken up Irano-Tatar fashion. When in 1438 the Council of Florence discussed the possibility of a union of the Greek and Roman churches, the Greek Emperor John VIII Palaeologes and the patriarch of Constantinople came themselves to Florence and were received with pompous festivals by the Medicis, the famous Florentine bankers and art-mæcenas. When in 1453 Constantinople collapsed before the Turkish assault, another wave of Greek fugitives, nobles, merchants, scholars, inundated Europe, but chiefly Italy. Thus in the early Quattrocento late Byzantine dress became the favourite fashion of Italy and then also of the rest of Europe. And as this dress was pretty similar to contemporary Muhammedan fashions, the way was thrown open also to these latter. In the time of the Borgias in Rome, the Medicis in Florence, Saint Joan d' Arc in France, of the brilliant Burgundian state in the Netherlands,

European fashion was full of Eastern elements. The turban as well as the *tukiya*, the *hanini* ( a form of the *turtur* ) as well as the Persian "templet", the Indo-Persian *taq* as well as the Sino-Mongolian doublehorned cap and embroideries with Arabian inscriptions were current everywhere and took fantastic shapes before all in the Netherlands. Eastern figures thus became a quite familiar ingredient of the ecclesiastical art of Europe. But as in contemporary European fashion Eastern taste was so predominant, no exact distinction of oriental human types or dresses was made. In most cases the figures and faces were shaped according to the classical ideals of the late Gothic and Renaissance art, and the costume was a curious and fantastic mixture of the late Byzantine, Syrian, Egyptian and contemporary European features. Female dress in Eastern scenes generally followed the Western fashion, because its ostentatious pomp was better suited for decorative purposes than the costume of veiled Eastern women. The first to introduce this new type were Gentile de Fabriano and Benozzo Gozzoli. In the frescoes of the Palazzo Ricci the latter has used a representation of the Adoration of the Magi, of the three kings who according to Christian tradition came far from the East to venerate the Holy Child, to depict the procession of the Byzantine emperor with his retinue of Greek, Tatar and Muhammedan nobles, pages and soldiers. And most of the most renowned artists of the early Renaissance period have imitated his example. Eastern figures in the new mixed style are to be seen in the paintings of Fra Angelico, Ghirlandaio, Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, Pinturicchio and many others in Italy, of Rogier van der Weyden, the Master of Flémalle, Quentin Massys, Jan van Scorel, Hieronymus Bosch, etc. in the Netherlands, Martin Schongauer, Michael Wohlgemuth, Adam Kraft, Albrecht Dürer, etc. in Germany. The later figures are very fantastic and lose any relation with the actual East ; but they are important because they have influenced Western art until the end of the 17th century, even to the present-day, because their example is to be felt in the works of Veronese and Tintoretto, of Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Jan Steen and many other far-renowned painters. The most characteristic deviations from oriental dress due to this tradition are the long curled hair and the crown in a turban, both derived from late Byzantine fashion, and the royal or priestly cloak, the emblem of the three Holy Magi.

A new living contact with the East was inaugurated by the rise of the Turkish power which extended its territories nearer and

nearer to the very centres of European civilisation. In 1453 Constantinople had been conquered, but in 1529 the Ottoman armies had reached the frontiers of Italy and the capital of the German emperors, Vienna. The occupation of Egypt and Syria by Selim I in 1519 had hit a deadly blow to the flourishing trade of the brilliant Italian mercantile states by the interception of the Indian trade; the piracies of Khairud-din Barbarossa devastated the opulent coasts of Naples, France and Spain. Turkish embassies went to Venice, Rome and France, and Western artists worked in Stambul. Muhammad II, in spite of Muhammedan prejudice, had a vivid interest in Western art and called several Italian masters to his court. The most renowned of these was the Venetian painter Gentile Bellini who has left behind not only a famous portrait of the conqueror of the Byzantine metropolis, but also some paintings of which one illustrates Saint Marc preaching on the Atmaidan of Constantinople, and a number of drawings from Turkish life copied by other contemporary artists such as Signorelli, Mantegna, Pollaiuolo, Sodoma, etc., but especially by Pinturicchio for the frescoes of the Borgia rooms in the Vatican and the Library of Siena. In 1512 an unknown pupil of Bellini accompanied the Venetian embassy under Domenico Trevisano to the Mamluk sultan of Egypt; his very interesting painting is at present kept in the Louvre Museum, Paris. There is another famous Venetian painter who visited the Mamluk empire during those last years of its existence: Vittore Carpaccio. In his scenes from the legends of St. Ursula, St. George and St. Stephen you see the landscape and people of Palestine, the women with the cylindrical mitras used in Bethlehem even at the present day and the Omar Mosque on the Haram-ash-Sharif and other buildings in Jerusalem. It is from his paintings that Perugino and Raffael have copied the temple in the background of their "Marriage of St. Mary". In 1533 a Flemish artist, Pieter Coecke van Aelst, went to Constantinople by order of the carpet-merchants of Antwerp; after his death his wife published his series of cartoons for tapestries illustrating Turkish life in a somewhat classicist style (1553). And a German engraver, Melchior Lorch (Lorichs) accompanied the Imperial ambassador Busbeck to the Turkish court whence he too brought back a series of sketches. Both these artists have had much influence on the art of the Netherlands, especially on the work of the greatest Dutch master, Rembrandt.

During this period, however, Turks were to be seen also in those parts of Europe which were still in the hands of the Christians:

ambassadors, merchants and sailors, political refugees like prince Jam, galley-slaves, etc. And the great masters of the countries most in danger of, and, therefore, most interested in the Turks made free use of these models for their creations. In Italy Titian has represented them in his "Holy Virgin" for General Pesaro who had reconquered Sta. Maura in Greece. Paolo Veronese has used them as figurants in a number of his paintings, such as the Martyrdom of Saint Justina, the Family of Darius, the Adoration of the Magi ; Tintoretto in his scenes from the life of Saint Marc, etc., or Tiepolo in his Kleopatra-Cycle in the Palazzo Labia at Venice have done the same. In Germany most engravers have designed propagandist scenes from the wars between the Imperialists and the Turks in Hungary, illustrating Sultan Soliman the Great and his court, the manners of the Turkish soldiers, the fate of the Christians in Turkish captivity, etc. The oldest German representation of Turks are a drawing in the Germanic ( National ) Museum at Nuremberg ( middle of the 15th century ) and the illustrations to the "Opus transmarinae peregrinationis" of Breydenbach ( 1484 ) ; among the 16th century artists Erhard Schoen, Niclas Stoer, Jost Amman and S. Beham are prominent ; on the other hand, such famous masters as Hans Holbein and Albrecht Dürer have occupied themselves very little with this theme. But when the danger of a Turkish invasion had passed, interest in the East quickly vanished in Italy and Germany even before the century had reached its end.

It is in the West of Europe that Oriental tradition in art saw a new hey-day. As we have already seen, Eastern fashions and artistic themes had been introduced in the Netherlands during the rule of the Burgundian dukes. In the 16th century the Southern Netherlands had been one of the most flourishing provinces of the Hapsburgian Empire, its mercantile, industrial and artistic centre. Their artists endeavoured to vie with the great Italian masters, and visited the south, especially Florence and Rome, with the intention to study Italian art. These so-called "Romanists" now introduced Turkish figures, men as well as veiled women, into Flemish and Dutch painting, for instance, J. Pynas, H. Goudt, P. Aertsen and P. P. Rubens. It is probable that also here the interest in the Orient might have died away if Holland had not started on the way of a great colonial expansion. Since the Portuguese had discovered the direct sea-route to India, the Dutch had been the mediators of the Indian and American trade from Portugal and Spain to the shores

of Northern Europe. When Holland was separated from the Hapsburgian Empire by the religious wars of the 16th century, the harbours of the Iberian Peninsula were closed to her merchants. So they tried to reach India themselves ; and in the beginning of the 17th century Amsterdam became the centre of an extensive trade with America, Persia, India, Ceylon, Java, China and Japan. Although most of the Eastern embassies were directed to Batavia, the capital of Netherlands, Indian, North African vessels and also a Persian ambassador, named Musa Beg, visited Holland, and every year merchants, sailors and soldiers came home from the East loaded with oriental merchandise and curiosities.

But as only very few artists did visit the Indies before the middle of the 17th century, most of the Dutch painters tried to satisfy the aroused interest of their public by taking up the earlier Turkish tradition, slowly adapting it to the different appearance of those Eastern peoples which were in contact with Holland. For this reason it was not the Indians or Javanese who now came into favour with the painters, but the Persians who most resembled the Turks ; besides, the Persian embassy of 1626-27 had offered excellent models to all the painters interested in Oriental scenes. Chiefly Rembrandt and his school liked Eastern accessories for their religious pictures because the more realistic and historical interpretation of the Bible introduced by the Dutch humanistic scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam and by the Reformation, had opened their eyes to the fact that the holy persons of the Christian scriptures had lived in Palestine, Egypt, Syria or Iraq, i.e., oriental countries. Therefore, they vested not only Jews and heathens, but also the very central figures of their faith in an Eastern garb.

In the beginning Turkish dresses and other accessories copied from Italian art and from the engravings of Coecke van Aelst and Lorch were made use of. The teacher of Rembrandt, Pieter Lastman, was the first to enrich his scenes by the study of South Indian paintings from the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts. The Brahmins and Nayars to be seen in these pictures he has transformed them into the maidservants of Nausikaa, when she is surprised by the ship-wrecked Odysseus. The parasol used in South India has to overshadow Nausikaa, or the family of Abraham ; and the well-to-do ladies on his biblical paintings wear the *dopatta* and turban in the South Indian manner. No other Dutch painter has taken up these new suggestions ; only the parasol became a favourite requisite with many Orientalist



painters, until it had become a too well-known object of daily life to be of further interest.

In the meantime the Persian Embassy had visited Holland and caused much sensation. Not only Lastman, but also Jan Lievens and Rembrandt did homage to the new fashion of Persian scenes and portraits aroused by these foreign guests. And also most of the many pupils of Rembrandt had a predilection for this Persian fashion. Rembrandt himself was too great and too versatile an artist to confine himself to any suchlike type. It has been asserted that he borrowed many of his picturesque figures from the chequered life in the Jewish Quarter of Amsterdam ; this is not true. But no doubt, he studied all the manifold peoples who then came to this metropolis from the East : Poles, Jews, Russians, Turks and Moroccans, Persians and Indians ; he collected the prints of Lorch and Coecke van Aelst, Indian costumes and miniatures, etc. He must have had a number of Mughal paintings of the Jahangir school of which he has made use in several of his paintings ; there are his copies, of another collection of miniatures of the Shahjahan school sketched in the days of his financial difficulties (1656), now dispersed over many museums, whereas most of the originals seem to be in Vienna. In some of his drawings the influence of Golconda paintings is to be felt. Strongest of all, however, was Persian influence. But Rembrandt never strove after any exact representation, he mixed and retouched all these impressions into fantastic creations of his own, only intended to be beautiful and interesting.

In this respect he was followed by his pupils. There were some who preferred Turkish requisites like N. Maes and J. de Wet, others who liked Persian and Polish costumes like Jan Victors, de Poorter or G. van den Eeckhout ; others studied the Flemish masters of the 15th and 16th centuries and introduced also the Oriental fashions and types of those days. Only the last of all these painters, Arent de Gelder, was nearly equal to the high qualities of the great master ; and he was the only one who made exact study of Persian costume and manners although he had never been in Persia. But it is not improbable that he knew Philips Angel who had accompanied the Dutch ambassador Joan Cunaeus to Ispahan in 1651 and Cornelis de Bruyn, an artist who visited Russia and Persia in the first years of the 18th century.

With Arent de Gelder closes the series of great European artists discussed in this paper. He was the last of a great tradition. For

a whole century the Muhammedan and Indian East came into neglect with the European public. Indeed, interest in Asiatic culture was still in the ascendant, but it was China which now attracted the thoughts of the scholars and the fancy of the artists of the West. Since the days when Marco Polo and the Franciscan missionaries had (about 1300) first made Europe acquainted with Chinese culture, four centuries had passed away. During this period the European peoples had become more and more familiar with the East, they had got a fancy for the rich material culture and for the great rulers and heroes of the Orient. They, therefore, liked to see them as the incorporations of their own human ideals and their own religious heroes in the works of the Renaissance and Baroque artists. But on the other hand they were still far off from a real understanding of Eastern culture, especially of the mental and spiritual attitude of the Muhammedan and Indian world. They never doubted that there was but one true religion, i.e. Christianity, and one true civilisation, i.e. Western culture. About the end of the 17th century, however, doubt crept into the hearts of European thinkers whether the Bible were indeed the only possible revelation of truth and morality. A new philosophy, a new view of history came into being, for which European civilisation, religion, art and thought were only one possible form of human self-expression. And a new study of the East set in, which sought its first field of research in Chinese social organisation, art and Confucian ethics. Then, when the ideas of Rousseau became prominent, primitive man was discovered as a human being with a civilisation of his own. And then the 19th century set in, which brought Western and Eastern spiritual and artistic cultures nearer and nearer to each other, and which inaugurated our own times.

It is a long way from the days that the Western world began to realize the existence of other races and cultures, unto the day when it learnt to understand and to respect them; the same way which Asia had to go since the time when all Europeans were but *mlecchas* and *kafirs*. The classical age of European art, no doubt, did not yet understand the soul of the East, but it admired the external culture and the great personalities of the Orient, and by popularizing them has prepared the ground for an understanding also of the spiritual ideals of the East.

## THE GIFT\*

DEAR, this morning what will be  
My gift to thee ?  
The song that's born  
In golden morn ?  
But morning droops before the breathless might  
Of noontide's torrid light.  
So tired and faded dies  
The song that lies  
In morning's eyes.

Friend, why comest thou, when the day is o'er,  
Knocking at my door ?  
What gift wilt thou receive ?  
The lamp that's lit at eve ?  
But its light is for a corner lone and small,  
A silent hall.  
Wouldst thou take it on the road where others fare with thee ?  
Alas, the free  
Wild winds that wanton on the way tonight  
Would slay its light.

What power have I to give thee gift, however rare ?  
Be it a flower, be it a garland fair,  
Wilt thou bear  
Its futile burden when it fades in noontide's glare ?  
Whatever gift  
My hands to thee will e'er uplift,  
Will slip through thy fingers' rift,  
And ever must  
Mingle in the cold grey bleakness of the dust.

Better far, when thou  
Beneath the star that glimmers on Eve's pale brow  
Wilt walk in spring, amid my blossomed bowers,  
Listless and idle, and a sudden breath of flowers  
Will hold thee entranced and still,

---

\* Rendered into English verse from the original Bengali of Rabindranath Tagore  
by K. C. Sen, Esq, I.C.S.

In the charmed power of a nameless thrill.

That moment swift  
Will be my strayed gift.

And my starred arcades  
Will cast dim shadows and dreams as daylight fades ;  
And sudden and stark,  
Slipped from evening's stresses dark,  
An errant streak of light will trembling gleam  
And touch and greet thy inmost dream,  
That magic light on dubious skies adrift  
Will be my gift.

All my wealth is in such fleeting flash and shimmer,  
In a moment's glint and glimmer,  
It comes unbidden with songs that bring th' enamoured street  
Thrills and tremors sweet,  
And flies with murmurous anklets on its hurrying feet,  
I know not where it doth retreat,  
Nor hand, nor foot, nor voice, can reach its hidden feet.

Friend, what comes from this elusive strand  
To thy hand,  
Unsoughten and unknown,—that will be  
My gift to thee !  
My hands can nothing give that will not do thee wrong,  
Be it flower, be it song.

## REVIEWS

### CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PHILOSOPHY :

By Prof. J. H. Muirhead and Sir S. Radhakrishnan.

George Allen & Unwin, London. 16s.

THE present volume is a welcome addition to the Library of Philosophy, which already counts a number of publications, contributed by eminent thinkers of the West, under the able editorship of Prof. J. H. Muirhead, to whom no mere formal thanks would be adequate for the intellectual sympathy he has evinced in calling upon Indian thinkers of the day to make contributions to the valuable series covering different subjects of high interest. The same sympathy was first extended when our illustrious Sir S. Radhakrishnan was invited to write for the series his monumental volumes on Indian Philosophy. The eminent general editor has already brought out in the series very valuable works on the contemporary British and American Philosophy. It was no doubt a happy suggestion made to the editor by Sir S. Radhakrishnan that a volume on Contemporary Indian Thought should find a place in the series, and we are glad and thankful that the suggestion has the desired fulfilment in the present work.

No better review of the work could be offered, I think, than what the general editor has himself written appreciatively in his Foreword to the volume. He has stated all that was worth saying about the contributions made by the writers and the general trend of thought underlying them. The writers are all very eminent in their own way and have already a distinctive position in the field of philosophic thought of this land. So there could be no better selection of contributors to the volume. There are, however, many more thinkers of the day who have already made a name, though not so eminent, by their original writings. They might worthily find a place in a second volume of the kind, if one were undertaken to complete the series. As it stands the present volume may be regarded as a representative one. It has a distinctive character of its own, embodying, as it does for the most part, the contributions of distinguished Indian thinkers of the day, who, as a result of their studies of the philosophic thought of the West and of their own past, appear to have given a new orientation to the treatment of the fundamental problems of metaphysics and of life. An

exception might be cited with regard to the two eminent contributors who have been given an honoured place in the beginning of the volume. They might not be *technically* regarded as philosophers. But they are none-the-less deep thinkers—whose writings touch a vital core of thought and life. They have *made* philosophy—rather than followed out a beaten path in the field—which many a technician like ourselves might pursue out and cogitate upon.

There is a work published by an eminent German philosopher, embodying his recent lectures on *Contemporary German Philosophy*. Similar contributions are also likely to come out on *Contemporary French* and *Italian* thought. The distinctive name under which the volumes have appeared, or are likely to appear, might seem at first a 'suspicious' one. No one speaks of British or American or German *Science*. Science is science, irrespective of the country which contributes to the sum total of scientific thought of the day. It has no geographical limitations or national marks. Similarly, philosophy too might be considered to be one, whatever the country from which contributions were made to the thought. But a deeper consideration of the nature of the problems which philosophy ultimately undertakes to handle would rather go to the justification of the title of the volumes. We hear a good deal in the day about the 'scientific method' of philosophy. But could this method be *strictly* applied to the study which philosophy pre-eminently undertakes or should undertake? It is all right if we mean by the 'method' that philosophic thought, like the scientific, should be impersonal and objective, that no subjective tendencies or cherished ideas should be allowed to cloud the pursuit of truth, whether scientific or philosophic. This must no doubt have the weighty consideration it deserves. But when we look deeply to the nature of the problems that philosophy, as distinct from science, has to face ultimately, the use of what is called the 'scientific method' has to be adopted with a large grain of salt. The outlook of philosophy and of science differ *toto cælo*. Their subject-matter is not exactly the same, although they may be ultimately connected. But they work on different levels of experience. Science has nothing to do with values. Its attitude is impersonal, if not positively 'inhuman'. But philosophy originally started with values and has ultimately to end with them. It is wished that science might do the same, at least at the end. But it does not yet. The highest problem of philosophy lies with ubiquity of values—their source and reality. The metaphysical problems arose originally therefrom in the history of philosophic

thought of every country which claims a philosophy of its own and must lead there ultimately. Here lies the field of philosophy and a justification of its pursuit. Now if this be a fact, as it appears to be, then the question arises : How has the problem of value been approached and handled by different peoples inhabiting different lands ? The nature of the philosophic thought of a particular people is bound to be marked by the nature of the highest values recognised by them. These values are again embodied in the traditions of a race, and as such they work subconsciously in the thoughts which are distinctive of the race. They find expression in the characteristic culture of a people. And if philosophy represents the culture of a people, as nothing else does so eminently, then there is a deeper sense in which we may speak of the philosophy of a particular country or of its people. The present volume, like others of the sort in the series, has therefore a justification of its own, so far as it bears the name of this country.

Looking into the contributions which have enriched the volume, we find, again, the unique nature of most of them, bearing a distinctive mark of the traditions, both philosophic and spiritual, which have come down to us from a hoary past. The general editor has also noted this in his Foreword, where he points out the nature of the contributions as coming mainly under two groups—namely, those which are purely and directly based upon the Vedic traditions, and those which are comparatively and indirectly so. But both groups, for the most part, bear ultimately the stamp of the same traditions. This way of regarding and grouping the contributions may not appear, however, to be of much significance. It is rather superficial. What is of real worth and significance is the general outlook underlying them. The whole orientation appears to be unique in its way. It is difficult to evaluate properly the underlying sources which have influenced and inspired many of the contributions. In any case, they stand as something original in their philosophic outlook. It is not possible to illustrate my impressions, within the scope of this general review, either by quotations from or references to the distinctive contributions. And that is also not necessary, I think, for a work of this kind, embodying as it does various shades of thought and methods of approach adopted. To get at a true valuation of the writings, one has to read carefully and thoughtfully the whole book.

One special feature of some of the contributions made by eminent writers is the personal history with which they have introduced their

philosophic position and indicated the growth of their thought. This is highly interesting, affording an insight into the ultimate source from which their philosophic tendencies arose and the nature of the influences under which these tendencies shaped themselves into mature thought. A great German philosopher has said that the philosophy of a man depends upon his temperament. The feature referred to here will show how far and in what sense this statement is true. At least, there is nothing sacred about what may be called the 'temperament' of a man. And it is a question how far this 'temperament' itself could not be traced ultimately to the traditions under which one is born and brought up.

P. B. Adhikari,  
Professor of Philosophy, Benares Hindu University.

THEY FOUND GOD : By M. L. Christlieb.

( George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London. 5s. net )

THE jacket of the book describes it as "an account of some little-known holy lives", the material for which has been, as the author says in the Preface, "collected mainly from Gerhard Tersteegen's *Lebenheiliger Seelen*, first published in 1735 and now unobtainable." The persons dealt with are drawn from the various walks of life : Armelle was a servant, the Marquis of Renty was a royal councillor ; Marina of Eswhar was an invalid daughter of a Spanish professor of aristocratic lineage ; Nicholas von der Flue was a family man ; Maria Guyard was a missionary ; Catherine of Genoa was a philanthropist ; Heinrich Suso was a preacher, and Anna Garcias a friend of St. Teresa. They lived their lives hid in God, but not in cloistered seclusion, thus bearing witness to the fact that a truly spiritual person can, and does, serve both God and the world.

Through all these sketches there runs the golden thread of that mystery of the ages, which reason has so far failed to account for adequately, viz., the mystery of the conversion of Saul into Paul. They are all led by a vision or a voice. Armelle, in her prayer, during Lent, is surrounded by "a garment of light" ; Maria Guyard, while playing, suddenly sees the sky above opening up and hears a voice saying to her, "Will you belong to Me ?" and so forth. They, however, followed the voice or the vision implicitly and unto death.



But this pursuit was paved with the fires of hell, so to speak. What crucifixion they endured for the Christ to whom once they had pledged their heart and soul ! In their love for Him they forget their sufferings, so much so that they preferred the paradise of pain to the Elysium of apocryphal enjoyment. Their one prayer seemed to be that of Nicholas von der Flue :

“Lord, take away from me what turns me from Thee !  
 Lord, give me what furthers me towards Thee !  
 Lord, take me away from myself and give me to Thee !”

It is difficult to define clearly their several steps on the spiral stairway of the Spirit. But an attempt at analysis reveals that some of the stepping-stones on which they ascended to heights of holiness were child-like faith in the love and presence of God, prayer, self-surrender and silence. They engaged themselves in works of sorts, but all aimed at an alleviation of human suffering, because they wholeheartedly believed that faith finds fulfilment in works and also that it is God who is the real worker, they themselves being humble instruments of His Will, “which mightily and sweetly orderth all things.”

“Once I complained to God and asked ( says Anna Garcias ) why did He leave me in this ( Prioress’ ) office ? Seeing how poor I was, and nothing, just an empty straw. He answered, “With straw I light fire.”

Armelle’s confessor once asked her how she could keep the sense of God’s presence when she had so many different duties to attend to ? She answered, “If now, while I am speaking to you, Father, some one came who had something to say to me I should not turn my back on you or go away. I might turn my head a little towards the new-comer to listen to him, but turn back to you afterwards to continue our conversation. I should not have to remind myself or make a great resolve to turn again to you. I should do it naturally, without thinking, simply because I knew you were here.”

The stories of these scantily-known saints of Europe of the Middle Ages have been here and there spiced and seasoned in the telling by the author with observations concerning the contradistinctions between the lives of those practical mediaeval mystics and the modern man. These find their *finale* in the Envoi :

“That Golden Age when mankind, trained not only in the exercise of reason and enriched by scientific knowledge, but habituated to the functioning of its spiritual organs, shall perceive the Rule of God on earth—lies ahead.

And all who in this day and generation resolve to live to the Spirit and to banish fear help to bring that day nearer and are co-operators with God."

In short, *They Found God* is a fervid plea for the spiritual life in our modern world.

G. M.

## INFLUENCE OF ISLAM ON INDIAN CULTURE :

By Tara Chand, M. A., D. Phil. ( Oxon. )

( The Indian Press Ltd., Allahabad. )

THIS masterly discussion of the cultural metabolism of India under the influence of Islam is of great importance. The author has ably presented in historical light the data concerning Indian religion and art that bespeak of the far-reaching changes that cultural India underwent after the advent of the Moslems. This minute study of the various cultural transformations supplies us with a background against which we may also profitably view the modern cultural movements and judge whether they would lead India towards a synthesis of her cultures or the disintegration of the same.

The study is divided into two epochs. The first ranges from the 8th to the 13th and the second from the 13th to the 18th century of the Christian era. The first chapter, on "Pre-Islamic Hindu Culture", is a brief but comprehensive review of the pre-Islamic India. This period, following the passing away of Harsa, which marks the advent of the middle ages, is the period of incessant wars among the feudal lords of India and of Moslem incursions. Buddhism and Jainism are being washed away and sectarian Hinduism, charged with Buddhistic doctrines, reasserts itself with great strength. The result was that Buddhism that "emphasised the democratic side of religion, the spiritual enfranchisement of sudras and women, and the preaching of religion through the medium of the popular language" was defeated at very point of contact with Brahmanism. On the other hand, this period marks the culmination of Hindu philosophy and arts. The *karma* and the *jnana* sides of the Indian philosophy completed their growth. In religion *bhakti* movement began to grow luxuriantly.

At this juncture appear Moslems in India. "The south of India was then greatly agitated by the conflict of religions. . . . Politically, too, it was a period of unsettlement and upheavals. . . . Islam appeared

upon the scene with a simple formula of faith, well-defined dogmas and rites, and democratic theories of social organisation " ( pp. 33, 34, 84 ). The conversion of important chiefs to Moslem faith marked the beginning of the new movement. Moslems were appointed to important civil and military services, conversion to Islam was encouraged and with the growth of commercial colonies on Indian coasts Moslem influence began to be felt in the interior of Southern India. [ Here I take the liberty of suggesting that the history of this phase of the cultural interaction could have been compared with advantage with the change that India has recently undergone after coming in contact with Europe. ]

The next chapter is devoted to "Mysticism in Islam". It is a summary of the Sufic and intellectual movements in Islam as they developed under Greek and Buddhistic influence. These movements, brought into India by Moslem Sufis and others, transformed the Bhakti movements in the South into sorts of Hindu-Moslem sects. However, much of the Bhakti movement remained Buddhistic in its nature. The Bhaktas of God preached the love of personal God with Shaivism or Vaishnavism as their cults. The author has gone into minute details of the prevailing cults and their philosophies.

This religious upheaval has been ascribed by some to internal causes only, by others to Christian influence. The author, however, is of opinion that ". . . the elements in the southern schools of devotion and philosophy, taken singly were derived from ancient systems, but the elements in their totality and in their peculiar emphasis betray a singular approximation to Moslem faith and therefore make the argument for Islamic influence probable" ( p. 107 ). These devotional schools emphasised monotheism, emotional worship, self-surrender, adoration of the *guru*, laxity in caste system, indifference towards rituals—all which definitely show approach to Moslem faith. "These features," observes the author, "of the reform movements could hardly be due to Buddhism and Jainism, for both were in their later days rigidly bound up with ceremonialism and image worship, which was indeed one of the very causes of their downfall. They could scarcely be derived from the prevailing types of Hindu religion, for the worship of Vishnu, Shiva or Sakti was ritualistic as well as that of other Vedic sects" ( pp. 113-114 ).

The author then goes into details of the religion of the *Lingayat* and the *Siddhar* sects which show amazing similarity with Moslem creed. "Among them, marriage is voluntary, the consent of the bride

before marriage is necessary and child marriage is considered wrong. Divorce is allowed. Widows are treated with respect, and they are permitted to marry again. The dead are not cremated but buried, the dying man is given a bath, no *śradha* or death ritual is prescribed . . . " ( pp. 118, 119 ). Such details have led the author to conclude that *Lingayatism* was the result of the influence of Islam in the south. "No other hypothesis," he writes, "appears sufficient to explain the revolutionary character of its doctrines and customs" ( p. 119 ). They call their God Allama which is probably an Arabic word.

The author devotes the next chapter to the appearance of the Moslems in the North. After giving a brief account of the religious aspect of the North after Harsa, the author describes the *Bhakti* movement as it travelled from the South to the North and gave birth to the *Vaishnava* movement there. Then Moslems invaded the North. By the 14th century their conquest of India was complete. The impact produced at first a change and then a mixed culture. The result was, to put in the words of the author: "Not only did Hindu religion, Hindu art, Hindu literature and Hindu science absorb Moslem elements, but the very spirit of Hindu culture and the very stuff of Hindu mind were also altered, and the Moslem reciprocated by responding to the change in every department of life" ( p. 137 ). "Above all, a new linguistic synthesis takes place ; the Moslem gives up his Turkish and Persian and adopts the speech of the Hindu. He modifies it like his architecture and painting to his needs and thus evolves a new literary medium—the Urdu. Again both Musalmans and Hindus adopt it as their own . . . " ( p. 139 ). This synthesis was not, however, the result of a conscious effort on the part of the Moslem to adapt and modify the Hindu language to his special needs. The Hindus too, as much unconsciously, absorbed the Persian element into their language and the natural result was the modification of the vernacular of Delhi into Urdu. And this Urdu, the language of the Capital of India became slowly dispersed all over India. Other dialects of the North, while they were also influenced by Persian language and thought, continued their existence as vernaculars of their quarters. These as well as Urdu were employed for literature.

The author observes that the Moslem influence is most conspicuous in customs, intimate details of domestic life, music, fashions of dress, cooking, ceremonials of marriage, celebration of festivals and fairs and courtly institutions.

He next comes to Ramananda and Kabir. He ably reviews the

religious position of the sects originating with Ramananda—one conservative, the other radical, respectively headed by Tulsidas and Kabir. With regard to the nature of Kabir's poetry as well as his religious views, it is true that in the Hindi languages Kabir had no precursor "and the only models which he could follow were Moslem ones, e.g. *Pandnama* of Faridud-Din Attar . . ." ( p. 151 ). Kabir's terminology shows his intimate acquaintance with Sufism. His philosophy, his conception of a common religion for Humanity, prove that the Sufic system of metaphysics was the one he had adopted for his teachings. He does not pay much consideration to the doctrine of Karma. "Kabir's was the first attempt to reconcile Hinduism and Islam ; the teachers of the South had absorbed Moslem elements but Kabir was the first to come forward boldly to proclaim a religion of the centre, a middle path, and his cry was taken up all over India and was re-echoed from a hundred places" ( p. 165 ).

The author then takes up Indian Architecture. After reviewing the religions and the natural background of Indian art and its peculiarities as against Moslem art, the author deals with the result of the clash of the two. 61 illustrations of Indian and Indo-Moslem architecture and painting are appended to the book. To put in the words of the author, the result of the interaction in the field of architecture was : "The simple severity of the Moslem architecture was toned down, and the plastic exuberance of the Hindu was restrained. The craftsmanship, ornamental richness and general design remained largely Hindu, the arcuated form, plain domes, smooth-faced walls and spacious interiors were Moslem superimpositions" ( p. 243 ).

Indian painting underwent similar change. The author discusses the method of painting in pre-Moslem India, and the Moslem technique of the painters of Herat, Samarqand, Ispahan and Baghdad separately. Then he reviews the results of their interaction in India. "Upon the plasticity of Ajanta were imposed the new laws of symmetry, proportion and spacing from Samarqand and Herat. To the old pomp new splendour was added, and to the old free and easy naivete of life a new sense of courtly correctness and rigid etiquette" ( p. 269 ).

We hope the author would continue to work on the same lines and contribute to the study of the cultural interaction in the fields of literature and social customs as well.

M. Ziauddin.

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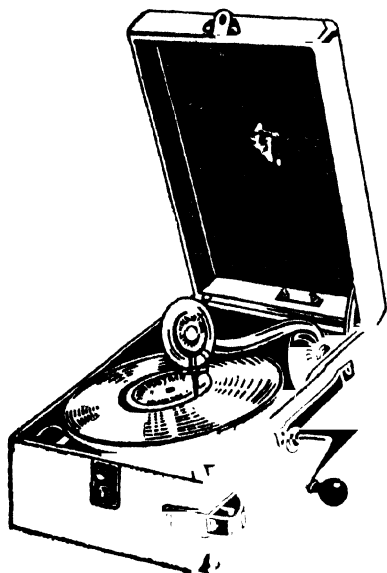
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Where the mind is without fear  
And the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken up  
Into fragments by narrow domestic walls;  
Where words come out from the depth of truth;  
Where towering, stretching, stretching  
Toward perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason  
Has not lost its way  
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;  
Where the mind is led forward by thee  
Into ever widening thought and action  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,  
Let my country awake.

Robinowath Tagore









# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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August

New Series, Vol. III, Part II.

1937

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## JOURNEY TO PERSIA\*

Rabindranath Tagore

### II

*13th April, 1932.* Bushire, a sea-port, the resort of ships, is not typical of Persia. In the afternoon a member of the Persian Parliament came to call on me. He asked me what, in particular, I was curious to learn about their country. I told him it was my desire to make acquaintance with the real Persia, as established in her own genius.

"That is not so easy," said he. "Who knows where that Persia is to be found? A large proportion of our people are uneducated,—in them the old has decayed, the new not yet taken root. On the other hand, those of us whom we call educated are merely modern,—they are becoming aware of the present, but have lost sight of the past."

What I think about it is that a country is never manifest in the generality of its people. Through most of them its real character is but vaguely expressed, being truly revealed only by the life and work of a specially gifted few. The under-current of experience and attainment, accumulated in the depths, does not find its way to the surface except where its crust is here and there pierced by suitable outlets. The light obscured by the dullness of the mass mind shines out only through rare personalities of clarified sensibility; and, in seeking such men of vision, it is beside the point to look for their book-learning or public renown. Such representatives of the soul of Persia there must be even to-day; but the problem for the casual traveller is how to get into touch with them.

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\* The first part of this article appeared in Vol. II, Part III of this Journal. Both the parts have been translated from the original Bengali by Surendranath Tagore.

The name of the owner of the house in which we are staying is Mahmud Reza. He is a placid and yet energetic youth, a landlord as well as merchant. He has cheerfully accepted the discomfort and privation of placing his household at our service. He is constantly busy in the background, looking after our comfort, and takes care not to embarrass us by coming forward to thrust his hospitality on our attention.

*15th April.* Ever since our arrival, all kinds of functions have been held, and are being planned, to do me honour. This honour my heart finds some difficulty in appropriating, for its meaning is not clear to me.

Who or what am I to these Bushire crowds? Whether in my work, or thought, or every-day life, I am for them far distant,—entirely out of their ken. When I had been to Europe, the people there knew something of me as a poet, and so could judge me on materials before them. These people also believe me to be a poet, but solely by force of imagination. To them I am a poet, not of this or that kind, but in the abstract; so that nothing stands in the way of their clothing me with their own idea of what a poet should be. Persians have a passion for poetry, a genuine affection for their poets; and I have obtained a share of this affection without having to show anything for it in return.

I am reminded of what happened when I was in Egypt. The leading statesmen who came to welcome me on my arrival, told me that the sitting of their parliament which was on at the time, had been temporarily suspended for the purpose. Such a thing could be possible only in an oriental country. They evidently looked on me not only as a poet, but an Oriental Poet, and must have felt that their country was sharing in the honour which was being shown to me.

Coming to think of it, my relations with Persia are even more intimate, for am I not an Indo-Aryan! Persians have throughout their history taken pride in their Aryan descent, and that feeling is gaining strength under the present regime. So they are looking on me as a blood relation. On top of that, the rumour has gone forth that my poems have an affinity with those of their favourite mystic poets of old. So here I am in that pleasant and happy land where I have no readers, but where the freedom of the royal road opened out by its own poets of all time, has been conferred on me. The people come to me, not as judges assessing a price for what I may have achieved, but simply with their offering of love as from man to man.

In thus feeling me to be their own, they have made no mistake, for I too feel quite close to them,—so easy and natural has been our meeting. No reserve have I come up against to make me conscious of belonging to a different nation or different religion.

*16th April.* We should have started for Shiraz at 7 o'clock this morning, and so though I felt far from strong, I was up, as usual, at dawn. But the others were still in bed, and it was past nine by the time we were all ready.

Our road is an unmetalled track and its condition is not in keeping with the gait of our motor car, so that its occupants are at every moment kept aware of this disharmony, nay, made to feel it in their bones! Empty plains follow one after another in endless procession with no sign of trees or dwellings of men. The greater part of Persia is on a high plateau, several thousand feet above sea-level, surrounded by hills, with ranges running through as well. This slopes down towards a large tract of desert land, with a scanty rainfall, for the rain clouds are intercepted by the hills. Some of the hill streams reach this tract, making streaks of fertility through it, but being absorbed by the desert, they fail to cross over it to the sea.

In the course of being jolted through the rough, desolate road, we now catch glimpses of distant clumps of date palms and acacia trees. On a road of this kind in India, bullock carts would have been found groaning along; here, in place of these, we come across a few pack-asses, or a string of mules, with camels here and there feeding on the thorny bushes by the way-side. In spite of the deserted appearance of the countryside, armed police are posted at ten-mile intervals. There is also a government service of creaky, shaky motor omnibuses, one of which occasionally rattles by on its downward journey, giving us a wide berth.

The day advances, the sun mounts high, but the breeze which scatters the dust raised by our wheels, is as cool as our cold-weather wind in Bengal. Our car halts at each police station to pick up the messages of welcome that have been awaiting us. Gradually a range of hills comes into view on our right, which earlier in the day was veiled by the turbid blue of the horizon. The dusty road gets more pebbly, as we approach the hilly country. We pass hill-streams cutting their way through the rocky soil, but they do not seem to be purveying water for the service of man, for no men are to be seen. Amidst scattered willows, zizyphs, and wild-cotton shrubs, an occasional cultivated field attracts our gaze; but where are the cultivators?

The inhabitants of this region are called Bashkirs, a tribe of Turkish origin. They used to make their living by brigandage, but have been induced to behave more peaceably under the present regime. Some years ago they wrecked a bridge on this road, and preyed on the motor-buses which thus came to be held up. After this incident the Government has kept the son of the Chief of the tribe as a hostage in Teheran,—hardly a drastic, but quite an effective, remedy. The Chief, Shakrulla Khan, came over from his village to greet us at the next halt,—a greeting that would probably have proved somewhat different in the old days ! From Bushire a car carrying an armed escort has been preceding us, which I took to be a token of kingly courtesy, but which I now see may have more practical considerations behind it.

We go climbing up the winding hill-path. The hills here seem to be nothing but bald mud-heaps, with not even any rocks showing,—looking like the shaven pates of so many decapitated giants ! One can see it is a rainless region, otherwise these earthen mounds, with no roots of trees to bind them, could not have stood unworn for any length of time. On every side stretch these bare hill tops,—dry, uninhabited, devoid of vegetation.

It is past noon, yet we are still a long way off from Shiraz. Lest the journey should prove too much of a strain, it was originally arranged that we were to lunch with the Governor of Kazerun and spend the night at his place. But our belated start prevents our reaching Kazerun in time, so we stop at Konartakht, a mud-built police outpost on the way. A carpet is spread over the earthen floor, and we are served with the food brought along with us. It gives us the feeling of being the guests of some chieftain in a desert oasis, such as we read of in story books.

We resume our journey ; the day wears on ; till at length we come upon an escort of horsemen sent by the Governor to meet us who have been waiting here ever so long. And, at last, we arrive at the Kazerun Governor's palace, through a thickly planted avenue of great orange trees, their soft, fragrant shade bringing immense relief to our parched senses. This sudden profusion of verdure in spots, amidst vast sandy wastes, is a feature of Persia.

Arrangements for an alfresco dinner have been made in the garden, but for the present I have to forgo the pleasure of sitting out there, so utterly tired I am. They show me into a little carpeted room with a bed, on which I lie down to rest. The breeze is delightfully

soothing, and the festive foliage refreshes my eyes through the open window.

After a while I leave my bed and go out into the garden where I find the dinner being cooked in huge pots under the trees,—much as is done on the occasion of a large-scale feast in our own country,—giving a foretaste of the good cheer in prospect.

A public holiday had been declared in honour of our expected arrival, but the large gathering, originally awaiting us, was now thinned down owing to our delay. We eventually sat down to dinner under lighted lamps outside, with those who had stayed on. Our host, out of consideration for my tiredness, offered to have me served in my own room, but I preferred to join the party. The viands—*pillau*, *kahab*, etc.—were of the style known in Bengal as *Moghlai*. Our fellow-guests were all full of praise for their king whose extraordinary genius has changed the face of Persia within the short space of a single decade.

The recent history of Persia begins from the reign of Shah Nasir-ud-din, towards the latter end of the Nineteenth Century ; or rather, from the atrocities perpetrated by his predecessor, Aga Mohammed Khan,—not a true Persian, but belonging to a Turkish tribe brought into Persia by Timur-lang,—which left the legacy of a tendency towards revolt amongst the people. One of the first signs of the impending revolution was to be seen in the rise of the unorthodox Babi sect, at about the same time when Rammohan Roy was engaged in his work of religious reform in our own country. This Babi movement was ruthlessly persecuted by Shah Nasir-ud-din.

Nasiruddin was the first Shah of Persia to visit Europe, a visit which resulted in a net of foreign debt being spread over the country. The tobacco monopoly granted by the Shah to a British Company was keenly resented by his people, and they started a boycott. It is not an easy thing for a whole country to abjure the fragrant weed, but that seems to be what happened,—putting an end to the monopoly, but involving the payment of a heavy compensation to the Company. Then Russia stepped in with grants of railway concessions. Belgium supplied tax-collecting officers. And Britain busied herself trying to effect a partition of the Kingdom.

While all this was going on, a clamour arose from the side of the people for the initiation of responsible government, to which the Shah had to give in, and the first Persian parliament was opened in 1906. On his death, Shah Nasiruddin was succeeded by his son, Shah

Mohammed Ali. In his reign the provincial Governors had virtually become autonomous in their respective territories, and strenuously opposed the popular movement.

It goes without saying that the people were at first unskilled in the art of democratic government. And in acquiring the necessary proficiency by practice, they were grievously hampered by the disorganised state of the Revenue Department, with the consequent dearth of funds. So the proposal was mooted in parliament to get rid of the provincial Governors as well as of the Belgian tax-collectors. This led to a tussle between the rulers and the ruled, in the course of which the forces of the Shah, joined by the Priesthood, fell upon the headquarters of the popular government and razed the Parliament House to the ground. They could not, however, suppress the popular movement, which again reasserted itself with a new constitution.

Meanwhile Russians and Britishers had come to a mutual understanding by virtue of which they straddled the hapless country, the former at its head-end on the North, the latter at its tail-end on the South, with their respective armed forces as goads, leaving its own life dimly flickering at the centre. Neither the British nor the Russian authorities had any love for this new Persian constitution,—they, rather, deeply sympathised with the annoyance caused by his troublesome people to the poor, worried Shah ! Consequently they backed the latter in his attacks on the Parliament, and in the warfare which followed, many Persian statesmen lost their lives, some were imprisoned, others left the country. It was clearly proved, remarked the *London Times*, that Democracy was not within the competence of oriental peoples !

Teheran was reduced to subjection by inhuman persecution, but the other provinces held out and continued the struggle for independence, till at last the Shah had to fly from the country, leaving his eleven-year-old son on the throne. England and Russia saw to it that the Shah should continue to enjoy a handsome pension in his exile, till he made an unsuccessful attempt, with the help of the Russian forces, to re-occupy the throne. This time he was finally defeated.

At this juncture Morgan Schuster was brought over from America to set the finances of Persia in order. He was on the point of achieving success, when Russia put in her spoke and gave a mandate to Persia to get rid of Schuster. The edict went forth that no foreigner was to be appointed by the Persian government without first obtaining the consent of Britain and Russia. This was, of course,

opposed by the Persian Parliament, but to no avail. So Schuster had to go, and one of the most poignant episodes in history is told in his book, *The Strangling of Persia*, relating to this period.

Then came the European war of which Russia sought to take advantage to consolidate her position in Persia, but her own revolution intervened and put a stop to the designs of her Imperial Rulers. This gave the opportunity to Britain to make a similar attempt, and the struggle between it and the Persian people went on. In 1919 Sir Percy Cox was the British Ambassador in Persia, and he contrived to come to an arrangement with one of the parties in Persia to secure the paramountcy for Britain in the government of the country, under the euphemistic term *Protectorate*, the real meaning of which, however, was no secret. Be that as it may, no one could muster up the courage to put this arrangement before the Persian Parliament for its sanction.

This was the time when Reza Khan captured and occupied Teheran ; and the northward advance of Britain was checked by the Soviet forces. In the end Britain had to give up Persia. Whereupon, at length, that unhappy country emerged from her series of tribulations into a state of political independence. The Soviet Ambassador, Rothstein, gave a written declaration that Russia would retire from her plundering expedition, surrender the concessions formerly extorted by her, relieve Persia of her debt to Russia, and hand over all ports and fortifications built by Russia in Persian territory, without asking for any price.

Reza Khan was at first made Minister of War, and then, at the request of the people, he was placed on the throne. Under his rule Persia has become strong both in her internal administration and her foreign relations. The foreigners who were holding high administrative posts have, one by one, taken themselves off. Corruption and exploitation of the people have been sternly suppressed, and a strict watch is kept to prevent their recurrence.

Persia has at last found herself, and come into her own—thanks to His Majesty, King Reza Shah Pehlevi !



## CHENGIZ-KHAN, TIMUR, IBN SAUD AND THE GREAT NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS OF THESE DAYS\*

Count Hermann Keyserling

AFTER the final correct proof of the 'Travel Diary of a Philosopher' had been printed, I revised the whole book again last summer. And it was very interesting to me that in the chapter 'America' I had predicted falsely the future development of that land, but had thereby correctly foretold that of Europe under a false heading. But in 1912, nobody, unless he was a true clairvoyant, could know that the causal series of biological weariness or degeneration would cross that of progress on the basis of rejuvenation. And equally unforeseeable was at that time the radical rejuvenation, due to the World-war and the World-revolution, of the true bearers of the future among the European nations. Thus I projected then my direct knowledge, reflecting the state of my own true unconscious, into the new world. Today Europe seems much younger than North America. In the latter, catastrophes cause no opportune changes; for the North American of today may very well die out as a biological type, and that much more quickly than is imagined.

Now my vision of the year 1912, directed towards Europe, was justified by the evolution of the Western world in all essential matters; so far the 'Travel Diary' is to-day more real than it was at the time of its appearance. What pleased me especially was to read again what I there and then announced as the positive aspect of barbarisation. In this respect I might to-day refer to three specially instructive books—two of these published by the Deutsche Verlagsanstalt of Stuttgart, namely, Michael Prawdin's *Chengiz Khan and the heritage of Chengiz Khan*, and the book of Rupert Donkan, named *The rise of Arabia* (Berlin and Leipzig, published by Wilhelm Goldmann), and lastly, Herbert Melzig's *Reza Shah, the Rise of Iran and the Great Powers* (Stuttgart, published by the Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft).

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\* This is an English translation by Dr. S. K. Maitra, Benares Hindu University, of the author's original German article. The author sent three articles for publication in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*. The first of these, entitled 'Significant Memories' has already appeared in the *Quarterly*. This is the second of this series of articles, all of which have been translated by Dr. S. K. Maitra. The third article of this series also appears in this Number of the *Quarterly*.



*Alimorath*

**By Rabindranath**



For the understanding of this age and its nearest future possibilities, I know of hardly anything more instructive than the two first-named works which are in every respect of outstanding merit, for they illustrate with peculiar clearness the possible productive element in, and the factor underlying the cultural indebtedness of, gifted barbarism. Chengiz Khan was from the beginning wholly uncultured and uncivilized. Nevertheless he had before 1920 A. D. anticipated the utmost speed technically possible in the twentieth century in the matter of communication and news service. Lastly, he was the first to introduce artillery and poison gas as methods of warfare.

How was this possible ? Only because, unburdened by traditional culture, directing his high intelligence exclusively upon his original object, namely, what was vitally necessary, he could grasp more simply the pure-practical sense of that which he experienced than any other person carrying on his back the weight of culture, and *mutatis mutandis*, could discover and carry out the purely purposive. The Chinese had long known the use of gunpowder but they employed it for fireworks, and their poison gases they used for attack and defence on a small scale. Chengiz Khan perceived directly the immense possibilities that existed in these discoveries, and compelled China's engineers to realize them. In the same way he raised the original speed and organizing capacity of the Mongols and made them into an instrument for world-conquest, just as artillery and aircraft are such instruments to-day.

Have not now the barbaric Bolsheviks utilized in the same sense, although in a smaller degree, the achievements of the older civilized people ? Highly gifted barbaric people are, in fact, more apt to employ world-changes in a constructive, and not merely in a destructive, sense than the inheritors of an older civilization. And this is true not only in the political, social and civilized sense, but also in the cultural sense. The descendants of the great barbarians are mostly more determined exponents of culture than the inheritors of the cultured past. For the *homo novus* directly feels, as no inheritor does, what culture means, and power amortises in him the feeling of inferiority, for his whole endeavour is directed towards its creation and extension. Thus the descendant of Chengiz Khan, Kublai, as a Chinese Emperor was one of the greatest exponents of culture. Now Chengiz Khan was never so destructive as the Bolsheviks are to-day. But Timur ( Tamarlain ), the man with a crown of skulls, was, however, even more so than the Bolsheviks. Nevertheless, his descen-

dant Babar was not only the founder of an empire but was also a troubadour-like minnesinger. And Babar's grandson Akbar was the greatest emperor known hitherto in history and the founder of the greatest imperial dynasty hitherto known to exist.

Exactly in the same way there soon arose out of Muhammad's wild hordes the Saracens. At first, however, they effected the rebirth of the Persian spirit, in which they supplied, as it were, the down-stroke to the all-too-fine hair-strokes. This brings me then to the second of the three books to be considered here, that on the rise of the Arabs. The Wahabis represent a rebirth of the original puritan Mahomedan type. Yet with their present king, Ibn Saud, they are already introduced into the circle of true cultural evolution. Thus everything points to this, that thanks to this originally wildest of the present nomadic hordes, the new Islamic culture has arisen which I have prophesied as imminent in my book, *World in the Making*. I believe, in fact, more and more firmly every-day in a renaissance of Arabia. There will, in fact, henceforth be many old, but long-forgotten, sleeping peoples who will historically come again to the front. The index of their strength, however, will be their power of faith. It is the original Russian religiosity which has helped Bolshevism to become a World-power. The Arabs also are a people with a strong faith ; so also are the North Indians. On the other hand, the Europeans compare very badly with them on this point. In the peninsula occupied by these, there are only at the time when I am writing these lines ( Sep. 1936 ), the semi-African Spaniards whose moral strength can be compared with that of the non-Europeans. I have often announced my belief in the future of the Iberian world, and in the winter of 1935 I said publicly in Madrid that I saw in Spain the moral reserve of Europe. Such a wonderful confirmation of this which has occurred in the last few months, I had never expected. What the cadets, women and children in Alcazar of Toledo have done far surpasses the heroism of the celebrated Thermopylae ; for thousands and thousands of years men will talk and sing of this heroism. What I mean here applies not merely to Toledo and not merely to the national troops ; the most wonderful thing is that every individual, no matter where he stands, would rather die for his faith than give it up. Here it is the spirit that truly fights, the exponent of which is always and everywhere personal uniqueness. Here, in fact, a nation is rising to a new greatness. The economic factor, conceived at all as an end, has never been here a decisive factor. Germany has also shown how a land which is

economically the poorest, can recover from decades-long economic mismanagement in a few years. So also out of the spiritual warfare of to-day, much as it is mixed with sordid elements, lasting light and glory will emerge.\*

And now to turn to Persia. Malzigo's book about Reza Shah is not so self-evidently clear as the two just discussed. For this reason the compact-objective account, giving the rise of Iran and the bare general outlines of her politics, is of special importance, in so far as there are renaissances. On the problem of renaissance in general, I have in the chapter, 'Morts et Renaissances' of my book, *Sur l'art de la Vie*, so comprehensively expounded my standpoint, that I can spare myself the necessity of a further discussion. But the rise of Iran signifies really for the light-hearted and frivolous Europe such a serious condemnation that this special case deserves special consideration. Iran had hitherto proved herself thrice in history to be a great power with a great prestige which, so far as I am aware, no other nation could claim to be. On all these occasions, serious decadence preceded new greatness, and on all these occasions, this could be overcome by the living creative force within the people in the same sense and spirit. The most important example of this is the Iranisation of Islam and Arabia. Religion and the language of the Scripture remained Arabic, and yet the true soul of Iran expressed itself through the originally foreign medium. Now the peoples of the East are generally much more long-lived than those of Europe. They are more tough, have

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\* For the understanding of the present Spanish Civil War, there are very few lectures more helpful than those of Reinhold Schneider, entitled *Philip II, or Religion and Power* (published by Jakob Hegner, Leipzig). The decisive factor in a movement or agitation has never been the idea or the programme but the inner strength which it exhibits. As I read the recommended book after the text had been printed, I was astonished to find the identity of the Spain of to-day with the Spain of the Philips. Now, as then, the final appearance of personality, in the face of the whole world, in the face of everything 'general', is the moving force. I wrote clearly: "Possibly the Spaniards would cease to be Christians but they would remain Catholics." This is true to-day of both the parties. It is the great Philippian hankering after the beyond, the same indifference towards the worldly as such which the civil war has brought into being. In her day Spain lost the American empire, because she felt it too much of a burden. So this time she lost the possibilities of socialistic welfare-thinking. But precisely for this reason Spain's importance to-day is at least as great as it was in the days of her glory. Here for the first time there is awakened anew the consciousness of the spirit which is independent of the earth. And if to-day no definite positive faith holds the palm, if the present-day Spaniard is more frequently "Nadistic" (Unamuno) than Catholic, there lies here the great security of a new alignment of life with the metaphysical spirit: all paths lead to the spirit, in fact, over the earthly "nothing".

better nerves. On this general question, however, I do not wish to enter into details here. But the case of Iran is also unique. The Persian temperament comprises, if we may slightly exaggerate it, something of the Indian deep sense, of the Hebrew *ethos*, the old Greek poetic joy and the French spirit—surely, a unique richness. This natural disposition continues demonstrably unchanged for thousands of years ; moreover, the memory of the days of higher culture was never wiped out. How now, however, if such a highly gifted, old people experience a revitalization and acquire the gifts of younger people ? In that case, and in that case alone, is there not only the possibility, but also the probability, that the old blood will show itself as permanently superior to the younger. Always, indeed, does the undegenerate culture-blood show itself as stronger than the uncultivated, and periods of standstill, nay, stagnation, as blessed incubation periods. Thus it may very well happen that the world-hegemony will within measurable time pass again to those peoples who possessed it thousands of years ago. *Only then* can the relatively so young Western nations in my view preserve their present position if they build on deep foundations as China, India, Mesopotamia in their days have done, so that the treasure of depth may survive the onslaughts of destiny. If we Europeans lay all emphasis on youth and the youthful, then the revitalized old culture will surely be lost to us. And if we lay exclusive stress upon physical work in the form of sport records, then the Negroes will prove superior to us. .

## ON RACE AND RACE-PREJUDICE\*

Count Hermann Keyserling

It is indeed a healthy abstraction that for a time the whole world, although it knows so little about it, makes statements about "race". A lot of false and stupid things must surely have been uttered very frequently and very loudly. In this way, it is what the Germans call "verredet", that is, talked away, and therefore killed much quicker than would otherwise have been the case.

What I have to say on this special problem has already been stated in the *South American Meditations*, in *Sur l'art de la Vie* and in the *Book of Personal Life*—especially, of course, in the chapter "Blood" in the first-named work—and stated with great clearness. Of course, it cannot amount to much, for very little indeed is known as to what blood is and signifies. There is, however, *one* book which contains so much sure data that they are sufficient to give a permanent outline for all time of the total picture. The book in question is *Die Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit* by Egon, Baron von Eickstedt (Stuttgart, 1934, Ferdinand Enke, publisher). This monumental work of over 900 pages should be read by everybody who is interested in the race question : for it refutes completely every one of the current vulgar theories. Here are some catchwords : All white men who later were known as Aryans, Semitics, Turanians, Turks, Finns and originally even the Polynesians, represent different forms of a primitive race of Europoids. All high cultural creation of this primitive race is the work of its Mediterranean variety, for not only are the particular Roman people in great measure of the same race by birth, but even the Aryan Indians, Persians, Mesopotamians and the ancient Egyptians. The pure Nordic race represents, along with the Turanians and Tungoids ( the mixed Turanian-Mongoloid race ) the chief disturbing factor ; from the beginning it is destructive, not constructive. It is only through mixture with other races that it has been at times culturally creative ( Cf. here my reference in the *Book of Personal Life* to the observation of Wilhelm Pinder that the Nordic race has always realized its individuality and its most essential characteristics through contact with other races ). Its destructive

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\* This is an English translation by Dr. S. K. Maitra, Benares Hindu University, of the author's original German article.



features, however, manifest themselves today, when in colonization and the subjugation of this world with the help of a civilization based upon the machine regime, its most characteristic invention, there occurs, in a more extreme form than at any other time, the most violent push of the Nordic people. The Nordic civilization has exterminated or subjugated more human lives than the Mongolians, the Normans or the Spaniards. As yet there has never been a human species more cruel than this. This is because in the cold-blooded paper-way of business transactions, there may be greater butchery, although this Nordic race could never bear the sight of blood.

What I have so far quoted from Eickstedt's book is a refutation of so many prejudices. Of no less importance is the proved *finiteness* of all national configurations. There have always been strong and highly gifted people who at one time simply ceased to exist any longer. Such, for example, were the Scythians, a very fortunate Nordic-Turanian mixture, which for a time ruled a vast territory extending from Russia to India. There are no successors of theirs which we can point out, although they were not of a purely dynamical nature. That the purely dynamic races very soon come to an end, is obvious. It *must* happen that the Goths, Vandals, Normans and Mongolians of Chengiz Khan's tribe should disappear as races, because whoever does not possess a "retarding motive", as Goethe called it, must needs cease to exist, whenever movement ceases. ( As regards Chengiz Khan, Eickstedt further points out that he was tall, blonde and grey-eyed, and surely not a Mongoloid but probably of mixed Nordic-Turanian blood, like most of the 'Siberoids' of that time ; Siberians were for thousands of years pure Europoids. Indeed, this land is the cradle of all later European civilization ! ) But judged from the point of view of race-history, no people ever lived long as such even without being exterminated by another race and without war, for every race undergoes a permanent change in correlation with its physical and psychical environment. Thus, there is not a *single* race to-day which speaks the same language which it did when it first appeared in history ! Hitherto, however, without exception, only *planetary* circumstances were taken into account, as affecting the destiny of races. The true cause of the present racial picture of our globe was the ice age which divided the Europoids, Mongoloids and Negroids into hermetically sealed compartments in such a way that there could be formed three truly consolidated fundamental types. Later, however, all progression and all recession, all advance and all regression have been due to

economic pressure. Northern Europe became for precisely the same reason the chief seat of pressure and the chief centre of unrest as the North Siberian and Mongolian steppe, inasmuch as the late comers tried to drive out the others, since all the best lands had already been occupied.

What had been said above is sufficient to stimulate in many an accurate study of this truly informing race book. To-day everybody must make himself familiar with the true history of the human race and with the great dangers which beset modern civilization. Probably we stand at the beginning of a much worse period than that of the migrations of the race in Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. Also about the true character of this age there is now a book which has corrected very many of the current conceptions: this is Gautier's book on *Gaiseric*, the Vandal king. It is, for instance, not true that the Germans or their predecessors destroyed the Roman Empire. The Western Germans were already in the days of the Romans in much the same condition as they are today in Baden, Hessen and the Rhineland (the present north German type did not exist at that time). They were full of fear of the Roman Empire and only now and then indulged in crossing the frontiers, in order to receive new tributes from the Roman Emperor and, where possible, high-sounding titles. So obvious was the suzerainty of Rome to them that in the time of Charles the Great the coronation of the Emperor was looked upon, not at all as something novel but as the continuation of an uninterrupted tradition. According to Gautier, it was only in 1806 that the Roman Empire finally collapsed. That dynamism which everybody ascribes to the Germans was only possessed in the days of migration by the Eastern Germans, whose chief representatives were the Eastern Goths, the Western Goths and the Vandals. These were originally Scandinavians of a family similar to that of the later Romans. But for centuries they lived in Poland and the Balkans, then in Southern Russia, and mixed with the original stocks, the Scythians, the Alani, and the Sarmatae. The people of this Nordic-Russian mixture—they do not exhibit signs of this mixture, so far as blood is concerned, but they certainly exhibit it in the psychic plane—were the true originators and promoters of the migration of peoples. As purely and solely dynamic, all these races, jointly and severally, have perished. But still they play even to-day an important rôle in the heritage of the Latin races. Characteristically the Eastern Germans did not stay long, if they stayed at all, in Germany.

On the other hand, by comparing with the account of Gautier, we can see how much of the original German, that is to say, of what existed before the separation of the Scandinavians and Germans, still lives in the depths of the nature of the Germans of to-day. As I was reading Kasimir Edschmidt's *Sudreich*, I felt what an enormous power of organization all Germans possessed. The migration of the peoples always took place strictly according to a plan. Gaiseric's migration to Africa and his conquest of the African coast was an act which can be compared only with those of the Nürnberg National Socialist party. No Teuton who was not a Scandinavian was ever a seafarer, and the Vandals seemed to possess very little skill in this respect. Gaiseric now organized so extraordinarily well that he transported, without any loss whatsoever, his entire people, including women and children, from Spain to Africa. But not only is the capacity for organization an original German quality; it even seems to be the type of social organization which lives today in Germany in the form of the national-socialistic order. The more I read Gautier concerning the mode of life of the Teutonic races with their princes under the suzerainty of the Romans, the more I am astonished at the similarity between the conditions of those ages, apparently so remote, and the present conditions. Recently C. C. Jung in his study *Wotan* has given a new demonstration as to how much of the primitive Teutonic element has been revived in the Germans of to-day. Wotan, according to his analysis, shows himself as the true spirit of the national-socialistic movement. The younger generations of Germans, according to Jung, are obsessed and possessed by the old god who had slept for a few thousand years and had in the meantime refreshed and revived himself. This alone explains the immediate "illumination" of intuitions and life-forms which had no similarity with those which ruled over the last one thousand years. And according to Jung, Nietzsche represented not Dionysos but truly Wotan; only his classical education and his philological knowledge moved Nietzsche to refer his prophetic thoughts to Hellas.

## THREE POEMS

Yone Noguchi

### A CUP OF MILK\*

THROUGH the water he gazed on his ribs, a wrenched wistaria vine,  
And on his limbs, leafless and withered like a wintry twig:  
Buddha's fatigued face shrunk between the wrinkling waves.  
In doubt of justice in pauperizing his flesh to a rug,  
He slowly shook off the water from his dirty waist-band,  
Totteringly he crawled up to the river-bank, and down he fell:  
The mango trees sent down shadows of caresses to his collapsed body,  
And made them tenderly cover it to sleep in their safety.  
( I saw through the screen of trees at the left  
The Nairanjana river writing a snail's foot-marks on the sand.  
"It is too plain for the dramatic background of Buddha's life," I  
thought. )

Awakening from trance, he noticed a woman by his side who spoke  
Soft voiced, "Accept a cup of milk,  
My humble offering to thee !"  
Oh, her voice that rings from shattered bone to bone,  
Oh, her voice reminding him of life's first gift of joy,  
Oh, her voice that so plainly expressed human love !  
He thanked her kindness, he accepted her milk feeling revived,  
For he felt touches of the dawn clearing the darkness  
Where he groped around the maze of penance.  
He cries in his mind. "Farewell to the self-torture of six long years !"  
( The voice of a bird echoed through the mango trees ;  
A squirrel strained his ears in the sunlight possessing the air. )

*Gaya.*

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\* Accepting a bowl of warm milk from Sujata, a maid who lived near Gaya, it is said Buddha changed his conception of life and religion.

## BUDDHA UNDER THE BO-TREE\*

WITH no exact reason he sat under the tree.

For he only sought a bit of shade where whisper might call him

And the mercy of the earth heal him from fatigue.

He felt, when he shut his eyes, his soul lifted on lighter winds,

Cut apart from the burden of his being which penance beat and numbed

He saw the meaning of it all—

The meaning of self-torture which disinherited him from ecstasy,

The meaning of greedy sense, turning him into a brother of beasts,

The meaning of Light, a lordly middle path running straight through  
life.

He felt the joy of owning all his soul ransomed from dusty pain,

He felt the glory of becoming one with the soul of Truth.

Buddha is composed and still.

The world fears and trembles under a maddening storm,

The world is burst and rent by the torrent of lightning and rain,—

On the world overturned, a miserable thing toyed with by devils'

fire-arms.

Leading the army of ghosts, the devil-king, clad in iron and blood,

Marches through the darkness towards Buddha under the tree,—

But how could the Satans approach him? How could they split his  
thought?

Over his mind the lotus bloomed with joy of the dawn;

He smiles seeing the Mystery that unravels to peace.

The whirlwind and thunderbolt retire for the dancers stepping into  
the scene,—

Lust and lure form a shadowy curve upon their shoulders and waists,

Lewdness rises and falls amid the silken folds of their clothes.

How with the wicked dance they tempt Buddha astray!

But the dancers soon yield to his composed mind that opens

To the inward song of birds lifting the morning skies,

Pushing the clouds apart. Out of the depth of thought

Buddha raises his eyes to the tree-leaves

A-swing above life's fallen wall.

*Buddha Gaya.*

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\* Not decoyed by Maya, the personification of carnal desire, according to tradition, Buddha attained Enlightenment under the *bo*-tree at Buddha Gaya. He discovered the Middle Path, away from the two extremes of ascetic self-torture and worldly indulgence.

## THE TEMPLE BELL

BROKEN is the silence of ages ! The bell rings out again  
In search of people who are gone astray,  
In search of people who moan in untold grief.  
How the bell rings and swells, how the bell leaps and runs !  
Bury thy cry in its rapturous sound,  
Forget life's mockery, for Faith its melody tells !  
Leave the ruins where bats gloat on the moon,  
Leave the ruins where crickets alone cry lamentation,  
Lo, the temple rises again in glory more noble and splendid !  
Come, people in quest of the Land of the Soul,  
Lay thy breasts of prayer to the melody of the bell !  
How the bell sings and leaps !  
The bell says : "Seek life's permanence in changing !"  
The bell says : "Mutability in permanence !"  
The silence of a thousand years is broken ! The bell rings out again,-  
Away from all delusions, receive joy its melody foretells !

*Mulagandhakuti Vihara,  
Sarnath.*

## EXCHANGE OF GIFTS

WHEN my heart did not kiss thee in love, O world,  
thy light missed its full splendour,  
and thy sky watched through the night  
with its lighted lamps.  
My heart came to thy side with her songs,  
whispers were exchanged  
and she put her wreath on thy neck ;  
and I know she has given thee something  
which will be treasured with thy stars.

*Rabindranath Tagore*







## LIBERATION FROM THE EXISTING ORDER\*

Krishnamurti

EACH one of us is caught up in a religious problem, or a social struggle, or an economic conflict, and we try to solve each difficulty by itself ; whereas I say, you cannot solve these problems by themselves, unless you first see the inter-relationship between them. What we call problems, conflicts, are merely symptoms, which increase and multiply because we do not deal with life as one whole.

So, in order to understand the connection between what we call religious, social and economic problems, there must be a complete re-orientation of thought. Look and you will see that most human beings are merely parts or cogs in a social or religious machine, therefore there is no true individual thought, individual action. To find out the intimate relationship between all our actions,—religious, social, economic, or political,—you must think, not as a member of a group, but as an individual ; you must stand outside the social or religious structure before you can examine it critically and find out what is true or false in it.

To begin with religion : In order to find out what is false and true we must see what religions are based on. When you really, critically think about it, leaving aside your hopes and fears, you will see that religion is based on receiving comfort when you are suffering. Your mind is seeking security in some concept, belief, or ideal, that offers you a position of certainty. Now, what happens when you are continually seeking safety, security, certainty ? Naturally that gives birth to fear ; and when there is fear, there must be conformity. So the so-called religions give the pattern of conformity to the mind that is wanting security, born of fear, in search of comfort. But where there is mere search for comfort, there is no understanding.

Further, religions being based, as they are, on the offer of security, exploitation follows. Those whom we call mediators between our present conflict and the supposed reality of our search—teachers, priests, masters, saviours—become our exploiters. The disciple cannot know beforehand what truth is ; his inquiry for truth can only exist in the conflict, not away from it. And any teacher who describes what truth is, what God is, is denying that very thing, that immeasurable thing which is beyond words. I say it is only through under-

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\* Substance of a verbatim report of Krishnamurti's talks in New Zealand.

standing the present conflict that you can find out what is real, and no one can lead you to it. It is only when you, as an individual, begin to realise the cause and therefore the falseness of the conflict in which you are caught, that you will discover the truth. In that discovery your own intelligence awakens, and you gain the everlasting happiness which is not in spurious spirituality, not in the conformity into which you are driven by fear.

You say religions unify. On the contrary, look at the world split up into sects, fighting against one another to increase their followers, their wealth, their authority, thinking that each one is the truth. There is only one Truth, but you cannot get to it through any sect, any religion. To discover what is true in religion, and what is false, you cannot be content to remain part of the existing machine.

The same is the case with your social environment. This fear which is created by the search for security, seeks shelter in society, which is nothing but the expression of the individual multiplied by the thousand. It is not some mysterious thing, it is what you are ; it offers security through tradition, which we call public opinion. Public opinion says that to possess is ethical, moral, and gives you distinction. Consequently, morality consists in adjusting yourself to a pattern of possessiveness. I am not preaching the reverse of it. I am showing you the falseness of it, and if you find that out for yourself, you will act accordingly, not seek the opposite.

For, suppose another society comes into being where the idea of possessiveness is held to be ethically wrong. Then the present idea of morality loses its significance. So we see that morality is not the right perception of things, but a mere adjustment to circumstances. Now you are driven by your conditions, by the environment you have created, to be possessive, whether you like it or not. Again, perhaps another system will come along and drive you to be non-possessive. That is just sheepishness. To me, true morality consists in understanding fully the absurdity of possessiveness, and voluntarily acting according to your understanding, not being driven either way.

Our society, at present, is based on class-consciousness. As beliefs grow into religions, so possessions grow into the expression of nationality. As religion separates people, so does nationalism. Through the instrument of patriotism, nationality is a source of war. So, also, it is no use talking about peace while you talk of patriotism. The patriot is the barbarian. To him his country is more important than humanity. You will only solve your problems of poverty,

unemployment, war, when you are individually real human beings, free from all nationalistic prejudices ; when you are no longer possessive, when you are not divided by beliefs.

It is a pity that on a fair morning like this we should be talking about the oppression and cruelty we every day support, the various exploitations that are consciously or unconsciously taking place about us. We try to endure them, to smile through them, though they lead us to an ugly, a hideous life. Occasionally, in moments of immediate contact, we have an intense desire to change, to uproot, and live decently, completely, humanly ; but when that immediate contact with the sufferings of life ceases, we fall back to satisfaction. If you are really satisfied, content to go on as you are, with things crumbling, surrounded by so much corruption, exploitation, cruelty, real horrors, there is nothing more to be said. But if you think that, as human beings, we ought to have a different environment, not only for the select few, but for the whole of humanity, then let us go through the problem together.

There are two things open to each individual,—either to do patch-work reform, or bring about a complete re-orientation of thought. What I call patch-work is this continual alteration in the existing systems, whilst keeping their foundation intact. It is like improving the slums of a city. Not that it is bad to improve slums,—but the real problem is, that there should be class divisions, that there should be people who are exploiting. So long as thought and therefore action is based on self-growth, self-aggrandizement, that is, on a limited self-consciousness, conflicts must continue to arise. So long as the system of thought is based on possessiveness, security, and so on, there must be numberless problems which can be dealt with only symptomatically, not radically.

You want to cling to your particular possessions, and think it enough if you let others have their own possessions ; but to me, the very idea of possessiveness must lead to conflict with your neighbour. You have certain beliefs, ideals, and you say to yourself that there will be a perfect world when all the people come to think as you do. But so long as you hold a particular form of thought, naturally you are separate from me, and there is no human contact. Then only prejudices meet, not real understanding. To me real change of thought lies, not in reforming religions, but in seeing the absurdity of religions, not in changing this or that system, but in seeing the futility of possessiveness.

So you, as individuals, have to decide what you want to do. Whether you shall continue to adhere to a system of thought, belong to a society, based on self-aggrandizement, with all its subtle cruelties ; or whether you see that so long as this state exists, there must be exploitation, oppression, and wars, and therefore you, as individuals, are prepared to change completely. You will only deal effectively with this question if you are really considering, if you are really suffering, not merely sitting down to theoretical observation, intellectual discussion.

Some of you object that they prefer service to thinking about truth. What do they mean by service ? They are always talking about helping the world, especially those who belong to sects. The military man, prepared to maim and slay his fellowmen to order, says he is serving the country. The butcher who kills, the financier who withholds food-stuffs from the starving, the priest who exploits beliefs, they all say they are serving the community. Who is to decide ? A flower, because it is beautiful, supremely lovely, unconscious of its own magnificence, is truly helping, not the man who goes about shouting that he is serving the world.

Personally I do not want to help the world—I cannot help the world—in that way ; it is naturally helped if I think and act rightly, that is to say, not by compulsion but spontaneously, really. I do not desire others to come into my own particular cage of thought, because I hold that to have a belief is a limitation. To really serve, one must be supremely free from the limited consciousness we call the “I”. Unless you really think, you cannot find out if you are really serving the world. To think really, frankly, profoundly, completely, your mind cannot be held by prejudice, fear, or preconceived ideas ; it must start anew, afresh, and not with a background of tradition. This thinking must be not mere intellectual delight, but can take place only in action. That living reality which I say exists, that supreme intelligence which I say exists, which I say I have realised, is to be found only through freedom from the hindrances which you have created through the search for security, for comfort,—the artificial security and comfort of possession and of religion.

To understand what I am saying is not very difficult, the difficulty lies in putting it into action, which requires not so much courage as comprehension. Most of us are waiting for the world to change, rather than beginning to change ourselves. Each man will know his real needs very simply, very clearly, if he thinks about it intelligently,

not so long as his mind is caught up in the greed of possession. There cannot be vital human relationships, and joyous living such as can only exist in the plenitude of the present—which to me is the only eternity—so long as mind and heart are crippled by fear, due to the desire for possession and security.

What if there is a future life? What have you gained by discovering that? You are not any the more human, thoughtful, affectionate, intelligent. Future life may be a fact, but to me it is of very little importance. Immortality is not in the future,—it is now present. And the present you can only understand when the mind is free of time. By time I mean memory. If each morning you were born anew, not with all the memories, the burdens, the encrustations of the past, then each day would be fresh, simple, and to live in it is to be free from time. The very inquiry into the future shows that you are already dying. It is only the dying who want to know what happens after death—not the living. So let us inquire and find out if we can live richly, humanly, divinely,—then you will find out what lies beyond. Then you will discover that there is no such thing as “beyond”. Life is one complete whole, without a beginning or an end. There is wisdom, ecstasy, eternity, in completeness of living in the present.

Has the virtuous life, you ask, no part to play in the realisation of truth? What do you mean by virtue,—a contrast to vice? Do you call courage a virtue in contrast to fear? You are first of all afraid, then you think you must develop the idea of courage; the process of running away from fear you call bravery—a virtue. But fear will continue to exist and show itself in different forms. Whereas if you begin to find out what causes fear, not cover up the idea of fear by what you think is brave, then in the discovery of the cause you are neither fearful nor courageous, but are free of both these opposites. To me the man who pursues virtue is no longer virtuous. You can only live a natural, spontaneous life, an intelligent, creative life, when you have broken away from false standards, because you have understood their significance, their falsity, and therefore are no longer bound by this pursuit of their opposites, which you call virtue.

We have lost all sense of feeling, feeling for the oppressed, feeling for the oppressor. We only feel when we ourselves are oppressed. So, gradually, we have intellectually explained away our sensitiveness, our delicate perceptions, till we have become absolutely shallow; and to fill that shallowness, we study philosophies. I have a kind of shrink-

ing feeling when you say : "I am a student of philosophy, a disciple of this or that master,"—never a follower of everyday action, never really understanding things as they are. Why do you want philosophies ? Because life for you is an ugly thing and you want to run away from it. Life is so dull, empty, stupid, ignominious, you want to bring romanticism into it,—some lingering, haunting feeling, some hope ; whereas if you really faced the world as it is, and lived in it, you would find something much more valuable, something infinitely greater than any philosophy, any teaching, any teacher.

What is this consciousness which we call the 'I' ? That is, when are you conscious of the 'I' ? Only when there is a resistance, when you are hindered, when you are frustrated. You are only conscious of yourself when there is conflict. The 'I' in that conflict is the consciousness of yourself as a form with a name, with certain faculties, tendencies, prejudices, longings, and chiefly frustrations ; and this you think must continue and grow and reach perfection. How can limited consciousness reach perfection, how can conflict reach perfection ? The 'I' may grow, expand, but, however large, it cannot reach perfection, because its foundation is in conflict.

You ask : "Remove from the mind this consciousness of myself as 'I' then what remains ?" Now, what remains when you are creative, supremely happy ? There remains that happiness. When you are really happy, greatly in love, there is no 'you.' There is only that feeling of love, that ecstasy. I say that is real : everything else is false. This limited consciousness of individuality is no doubt a fact in your life, but it has no reality.

To be a theist or an atheist, to me, are both absurd. The man who is not aware, who only hopes and supposes, it is he that looks to belief or disbelief to support him, to lead him to act in a particular way. To discover Truth or God,—and I say such a thing does exist, I have realised it,—mind must be free from all the hindrances which have been created through the ages. To free yourself from these hindrances your mind and heart and action must be in full harmony ; and then you will find out for yourself, without asking anyone, what that Reality is.

## MODERN (POST-WAR) HINDI POETRY

S. H. Vatsyayana

THE periodising of poetry, indeed of literature in general, must ever remain an arbitrary process. Providence does not move in well-defined steps, its movements are rather like the formless undulating progress of the snail. The process of division becomes more arbitrary and even dangerous when one talks of a 'period' that is too recent to be placed in perspective and examined in retrospect.

Yet this arbitrary division has its reasons as well as its uses, and is generally intelligible to everyone. Each arbitrary period has certain characteristics which distinguish it from all other periods, be they characteristics of form, of content, of tone, purpose or ideal. Two poets of the same period examined at close range may not only be very different from each other but may even have affinities with a poet or poets belonging to a different period ; yet it will be discovered that in some essential respect they are of a kind.

This essential is the spirit of the age. In all poetry of any worth, there are discernible two governing influences—the poet's own personality, and the spirit of the age. The personal quality of a poet is obvious to the sensitive reader from the first ; the spirit of the age is rarely understood by the age itself. This spirit becomes apparent only when one period is examined in relation to its predecessors and when an attempt is made to understand the forces and influences working on the poets of each age.

The subject of the present paper is 'Modern ( Post-War ) Hindi Poetry.' The writer is fully aware that his choice is not a happy one. The task of tracing out definite lines of progress in the present labyrinth of conflict and confusion, of inert apathy and electric urgency, is one that would have appalled Daedalus, and it is nothing short of impudence in the present writer to hope to perform it in any measure of success. In failure he will not even have the satisfaction of knowing that the subject was thrust upon him. Yet he has one consolation—that as one who makes some pretence to being a post war author and a representative of his age himself, he will, even in failure, have expressed two of the characteristics he will presently examine: namely, a perplexity with the problems of an age that moves too fast, a perplexity bordering on despair ; and an almost overweening self-



confidence which is in reality the instinct of self-preservation seeking the last resort of despair.

Post-war poetry, as such, did not exist in India. The reason for this is that the war never became a reality to the educated Indian—neither a distant, impersonal but large reality, nor an immediate personal one. For this again there were obvious causes. First, India was not sufficiently highly industrialised to be hard hit by the wrong side of the war. Secondly, the so-called 'martial races' of India constitute a limited, uneducated and culturally insignificant minority. Thirdly, in spite of conscription and Mahatma Gandhi's appeal to young men to come to the rescue of the Empire, Indian youths did not take to the army, if only because the government in India has always been suspicious of the educated Indian youth.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that the monster of war did not cast its dark shadow over Indian literature. And though a few isolated attempts at picturing the naked realities of war may be found in contemporary literature ( chiefly in fiction ), so far as the majority of our writers are concerned the war might not have taken place at all.

The utility, therefore, of fixing the war as a dividing point between two periods may not be immediately apparent. Yet any one who has watched Indian affairs at all carefully cannot but notice that the indirect influence of the war brought about deep and fundamental changes in modes of living and thinking, and completely changed, not to say revolutionised, our social, moral and spiritual values. It initiated a period of profound unrest and questioning, not of frustration and chaotic despair as in Europe. The seeds of political consciousness, which had begun to sprout in the early years of the century, and even during the war had already cast forth a few dark flowers, now ripened into a vast growth that shadowed the horizon. A sense of unity and nationhood began to dawn in the minds of the more or less educated young men of the country, till there hardly remained a person to whom the word 'motherland' had not a definite meaning.

Contemporaneously with this, the twofold attack on traditional religion from the east and the west led to a complex transformation in our attitude towards things spiritual. On one side was the rationalism of the Mahratta and the reformatory zeal of the Arya Samaj, the protest against emotionalism and mental apathy, the scorpion-whip seeking to rouse people from the stupor into which they had fallen after the decadence of the Bhakti movement ; on the other was the Bengali revolt against

formalism and dialecticism, the demand for spiritual solace, for communion, for religion as a personal experience. This internal struggle was further complicated by the impact of social theories from Europe ; our culture which had been based on the individualistic doctrine of salvation was brought into conflict with the socialistic philosophy of mass existence. We lost faith in old standards of morality which had failed so hopelessly; our attitude towards sin underwent a change. While we became more tolerant of the individual's failing as being conditioned by circumstances not within the individual's control, we also realised the futility of imposing the responsibility on God or providence or other supernatural powers. In denying individual responsibility we accepted social responsibility : God's business was taken out of His hands and became man's business even if in order to perform it man felt it necessary to organise himself into a God-equivalent State.

The war did not transform India, it did not revolutionise India. But it helped India to realise itself, to see its own face. And the face that India saw was a new face, with deep furrows of disillusionment, harsh lines of disquiet and the conflict of duties, a face deformed by despair and pessimism, blinded by confusion and perplexity. It was a face that demanded effort and at the same time doubted its usefulness ; that defied sympathy, yet craved for solace ; that hungered and would not be fed ; in short it was a face of challenge.

## II

Did Hindi literature meet that challenge ? And does Hindi poetry offer us evidence of awareness of that challenge ? It is not the business of poetry to solve problems, but it is the business of poetry as a sensitive medium for that perfect expression of experience which constitutes art, to be conscious of the problems that torture the collective soul of the age, whose experience it embodied. Does Hindi poetry, then, tell us of the joys and sorrows and perplexities of this most complex age ?

If a one-word label must be given to Hindi poetry today, we may, for want of a better word, call it Romantic. Yet the inadequacy of the label would be immediately apparent to any one who attempted to follow its progress. The reason for this is that in an age of transition such as ours, so many diverse forces are active that it is hard to pick out

one as the outstanding feature. Then again the ease with which literary controversy can be started, in this age of publicity, in a country which not only possesses special aptitude for it but also has tradition at its back, and the general lack of proportion and humour which causes writers not only vehemently to argue but also to come out with practical demonstrations of their theories in print while the reader stands by helpless and amazed, renders judgment more difficult.

Romance, the attitude of wonder, is necessarily the expression of the soul of man in a certain stage of civilisation. It is when the realisation breaks on him that the forces moulding his society and the values governing his world are not absolute and eternal as he has so far believed, but are relative, mundane, that man begins to hunger for a world of wonder and mystery and spiritual beauty.

In this sense it may be said that the romantic revival in Hindi should have commenced about the time of the 1857 upheaval, for it was then that the traditional institutions began to be questioned ( or at any rate seriously doubted ). And, in fact, the light and fanciful romance literature that began to appear in this period indicates that our expectation is not unjustified. Those were the early swallows, the harbingers of the full-blown summer we have today. Indeed, we can already notice a shift towards arid intellectualism, and soon the field may be ripe for the advent of a T. S. Eliot.

It is a curious fact that the first and greatest figure in our period is one who really represents the classical tradition—Maithili-saran Gupta. In this age of denials his is the clear voice of faith. The speed and the garishness of life have not shaken him ; amid the shambles of modern existence he still stands out dauntless and dignified, full of noble sentiment. One may try to explain that by his retired life of moderate comfort and one may urge against him that he has not known the extreme pressure of twentieth century life, but one cannot deny the ennobling influence of his poetry. He is not emotional, though his poetry has poignancy. He is not sentimental, though he is the poet of sentiment par excellence—and very cathartic sentiment too, cathartic in Aristotle's sense. Consciously or unconsciously he has subscribed to the classical assumption that love is an inferior motive and that women are scarcely fit for the position of principal personages. That is why, even in *Saketa* which is woven round Urmila as one of the principal figures, the poet has depicted his women less as merely human figures and more as individuals governed by almost inhuman ideals. The Sita who, when Urmila expresses

her apprehension that Rama may fail to string the bow, says in a supreme expression of faith:

To string the bow  
Had he not the power,  
My steadfast eyes  
Would not have fixed their gaze on him.

or the Urmila who says:

Be that as it may, I dry my tears and drink in faith :  
Wherever he is, he is well, since life yet throbs in me.

are a little more than human ; that is to say, they are human embodiments of a superhuman ideal.

On the technical side, too, Maithilisan has stood for the classical tradition. Indeed, he is mainly responsible for the rigidity in poetical rhythm and diction, which is one of the notable features of Hindi poetry today and to which we shall have occasion to refer later. Yet, in spite of this, Maithilisan's contribution to the romantic spirit is large and definite.

Classicism tends to order, lucidity and proportion ; romanticism to freedom, fancy, and caprice. "Classicism is method, romanticism is energy." To Maithilisan goes the credit of having roused Indian youth from apathy. His song touched the heart of young men, awakened in them the pride of achievement and a nostalgia for the age of legendary valour. His was a voice of protest and his is the one voice that has remained most consistently protestant throughout the period that he has been writing.

The individual has limits, but power is infinite.  
In action, even death is an achievement in itself.  
Do not go back for sanctions, be a law unto yourself.

\* \* \* \*

A man who lacks an urge, a passion, a madness in his life.  
Of what use to the world is his steadfastness ?

\* \* \* \*

Let our challenge be to Death himself—  
Before a new creation let us demand the cataclysm!

He has not cultivated an attitude of superior intolerance toward society, nor has submitted and fallen back. He has not yelled defiance, but he has never shirked a blow, never sought to escape.

Lakshmi saved herself by entering the ocean,  
Sati found emancipation through fire,  
Urmila will live, and wait, and endure.

is an expression of his own attitude, as is:

( But no : ) Pluck at thy sweet will all the blossoms  
That attract thee by their beauty or their perfume :  
The creeper bears them not to wither away  
But to be fulfilled in proud self-giving.

Nor has he been shut off from the true romantic consciousness of mystery. It may be difficult to read it in his longer works in the epic tradition, but in his earlier lyrics it is apparent. In *Maya*—

She came and clung to me.  
She bound me in her slim arms—  
Nay, ask me not to what nameless deeds  
She led me in numb acquiescence.—

one finds a hint of the evil spell of beauty which was so constant a motif with the romantics. The conception of an eternal traveller ( Narada ) interfering with mundane life, himself detached, is also a romantic conception.

His third great feature is his capacity for concentrated emotion. The couplet appearing on the title page of his *Yashodhara* is a good example :

This is the story of a woman's life —  
Breasts full of milk and eyes welling up with tears.

The real precursor, however, of the romantic movement is Jayashankar Prasad. He is conscious throughout of a supernatural world of wonder and mystery and his pen has the power of conjuring up vivid scenes of that world which he invokes in such lines as:

Night's beautiful soft hair is wet,  
Touch it with your hand, dearest,  
as a ray of the morning sun—  
Open wide the doors . . .

and which he presents vividly before our eyes by the power of his imagination supported by a language rich in imagery and possessing great suggestive and pictorial power:

For whom is thine emergence. Morning Light?  
Bowed to the earth, like prayer,  
Sweet as a flute, yet wordless,  
Of what unknown world art thou  
The restless pain-messenger?

In short couplets he calls up weird pictures which create a vague yet none the less real restlessness:

Like the flowers in Night's coiffure, wilted in her heavy-lidded sleep,  
Why do my songs grow ever more wayward and restless, my Beloved?

In the following lines he suggests unrealised mysteries, a vague sense of forbidden delights :

The south wind whispers to the horizon:  
"The goddess of the east is flushed with embarrassment,  
For during the night she has wandered in the vernal woods  
And now a languor is in her body."

In another the suggestion is less vague, the picture more definite ; yet the mystery of the bacchanal is there:

The drunken assembly of tired stars  
Nods fitfully in a stupor,  
The moon has tumbled aside, like an emptied cup.  
Night's bacchanal is at an end.

The romantic element is more obvious in:

Draw me away softly, O my Boatman.  
To that lone land where the deep-throated waves,  
Forsaking this world of noise and din,  
Chant in the ears of the sky  
The artless song of love eternally?

Prasad has repeatedly referred to the fatal power of beauty interfering with *sadhana*, holding men in thrall or leading them astray—a theme dear to all romantics:

I too said in agony, "Beloved, at your hands  
I want to drink the same heady wine  
Whose effect may never wear off."  
I opened my heart's secret like a fresh bud.  
But the Beloved heard in silence and smiled,  
like a full-blown flower.

Prasad's poetry has the seriousness and dignity required for expressing the longings and restlessness of the modern man—a restlessness made significant by the vastness of the issues that cause it. His verse is always delicate and softly suggestive, an effect which he achieves partly by the use of liquid sounds but mainly by calling up vivid imagery appropriate to the theme. His language is expressive, renders the emotions well, but lacks pliability and is not suited to realistic descriptions. In the few cases where he has attempted such description he has failed conspicuously.

After Prasad the romantic note is clearly heard throughout. It will be well, therefore, to examine the work of younger poets according to a different plan—grouping them according to their characteristic features.

But before passing on to such a systematic examination of the younger poets, according to groups based on their reaction towards environment, it would be of advantage to review the work of two considerable poets who fall outside the general trend—Siyaramsaran Gupta and Subhadrakumari Chouhan. The latter, a writer of touching domestic poetry, may, on the basis of some of her patriotic poems and the powerful ballad *The Queen of Jhansi*, be placed ( rather unjustly ) among that group of romantics who worship the past and feel a nostalgia for the mediaeval ; but Siyaramsaran it would be impossible to place among the romantics at all. He is of the class of reflective optimists who seek to find the good in what they know to be ugly.

Siyaramsaran Gupta is a poet with a philosophy. He sees the world and himself as a continuity. He does not believe, as the romantics do, that a great age has come and gone. To him no age is great because all time has the element of greatness in it—the process of existence is one, continuous and eternal. He is preoccupied with a search for the purpose behind that process, with endless effort to find the link, the fundamental tie that binds man to man. He suggests that the link is to be found in a great benevolent love. He tries to apply his guess to life—tries to understand, and even feel affection for, the lowly and the lost, the ugly and the corrupt, the fallen and the oppressed, the dregs of existence, for in his consciousness all these live ; his optimism is not a stupid shutness towards reality, the ostrich attitude which averts danger by closing the eyes to it. He knows there is ugliness and misery and filth ; but he knows more than that, he knows they are not to be despised. He does not deny the thorn, he seeks to find a purpose for its prick.

Yet his attitude is not one of mere metaphysical questioning. Doubtless, his reflection sometimes degenerates and becomes dry and arid, his poetry overweighted with cerebration ; but that does not happen often. Generally reflection gradually intensifies into a strong but dignified emotion, and we have a beautiful piece of poetry.

It was to be expected that with a philosophy such as his, he would take up the theme of the Eternal Traveller. In his poem, *The Path*, which is perhaps his grandest work, we have the poet addressing a path, trying to understand its endless quest. In this poem too we have a beautiful expression of that pure childlike wonder which is almost completely dead in poetry :

In all these little things  
The freshness of them  
That had been lost to me  
By a thousandfold recurrent seeing  
Is still known to you,  
Still loved by you,  
Still a source of endless mystery.

His gift of thinking saves him from falling into a morass of metaphor like so many of his contemporaries. He has no 'star-dust' stuff. His deep human sympathy goes straight to the heart and strikes a responsive chord in the reader. When in *The Outcast's Daughter* we find the unhappy father asking in agony :

Is my stigma greater than the 'Goddess's mercy ?  
In this one thing do I surpass  
The immensity of the Mother's love ?'

we are struck by the enormity of his punishment and accord him our fullest sympathy. In this art of adapting social themes to poetical purposes, of attacking social tyranny and abuse without falling from poetical ideals, Siyaramsaran has no equal.

As example of his touching optimism we may quote a couplet:

The glory of victory is not exclusive to the  
short-lived flowers :  
It shines forth sometimes from the foot of the  
thorn-girt bush.

This is from his beautiful poem *The Tryst*, a masterpiece of restrained emotion :

While the unrelenting wave of karma keeps  
     rising and falling,  
 Defying all obstacles,  
     In this counting house of profit and loss,  
     In light as in darkness.

Whose voice is it that my quivering heart keeps hearing ?  
While the unrelenting wave of karma keeps rising and falling.  
I know not how far more I have to go, how long the day,  
Nor where you dwell,  
But in sleep or waking,  
My pilgrimage knows no rest.  
Thus with untiring steps I march in joy,—  
I know not how far more I have to go, how long the day.

In conclusion attention may be drawn to the lack of major achievement in his work. His is the strange case of two virtues combining to produce a failing. His reflectiveness and his benevolence have resulted in a lack of that unbalance which is a pre-requisite for



great poetry. His love is undeniable, he sees a unity and continuity in the world through his love ; but his love does not attain the strength of passion. As some one has said, he "writes with his tears, but not with his blood".

Subhadra-kumari Chouhan is definitely a product of the post-war nationalist age. Her poetry is direct and simple, and often naive. Her simplicity, too, is not the deliberately cultivated, and hence more or less artificial, simplicity of the conscious artist, not of the art that lies in concealing art ; it is a direct reflection of a straight-forward personality. Nowhere do we see her employing the usual artifices of the poet—the 'tricks of the trade'—nor does she ever become learned or dissertative.

Subhadra-kumari Chouhan is pre-eminently a domestic poet. She has an essentially poetical outlook towards the little things of our day to day life, on which her keen receptivity is brought to bear with almost surprising results. The spontaneity of such pieces as *Childhood Rediscovered* is refreshing and more than compensates, nay, is even enhanced by, their naivete, which otherwise would have made them puerile and ridiculous. This is also true of such poems as *At Parting*, *Lover's Quarrel*, *Spurn Me or Love Me*, which are direct expressions of the almost abject self-surrender of love. These poems come dangerously near the line at which poetry becomes personal confession and hence indelicate and even faintly distasteful. All creative art is confession in a sense, but such confession is admissible only in so far as it expresses universal experience and can be enjoyed without an ever-present identification with the writer ; that is, so long as there is an impersonal, detached quality about the work. Be it said to the credit of Subhadra-kumari Chouhan that she does not falter even though she comes very near the danger line. Her very directness saves her and justifies her. Her poems are not only good poetry, but are revealing of that strange, almost irritatingly self-effacing yet thoroughly lovable model of what we have been taught to regard as ideal Indian womanhood.

Poems which are not domestic generally have a nationalist bias. Subhadra-kumari Chouhan is an ardent lover of her country. This love is reflected in several short poems as well as in her powerful ballad *The Queen of Jhansi*, a solitary example of its kind.

Occasionally she has sought identification with nature, but the results have been disappointing. Two poems addressed to flowers are poor and incomplete. She cannot feel a unity with the 'Great Outdoors'—her field is strictly domestic.

Subhadrakumari Chouhan has not written much. There is also a feeling of occasionalness in what she has written. Lately she has practically ceased writing poetry. Possibly the poetic vein is spent—the fire has burned out. A more likely reason is that the hunger which led her to write such touching domestic poetry has found satisfaction elsewhere. Indeed, if such poems as *Childhood Rediscovered* have any psychological implications at all, our conclusion is the only one that may reasonably be drawn.

We may now pass on to a review of the other poets and examine them in relation to their environments.

### III

The literary artist may react to his environment in one of four ways. He may escape entirely from its impact. This would result in the production of utopias, romances, mysteries. He may bear the impact and face disappointment and cruel disillusionment—resulting in realism of the starkest kind. He may try to snatch a bit of beauty from what he knows to be harsh and ugly—an attitude of restrained protest, of thoughtful optimism—producing often the most delightful poetry. Or he may react with passive acceptance and be overwhelmed by his environment. This group would include cynics, hedonists, fatalists,—all the legions of despair.

We have already surveyed the environment of the modern Hindi poet. Judging modern poetry in the light of the above grouping, we will find that we have a very large output in the first and the last classes—those that yield to the impulse to escape and those that submit completely. The reflective optimists are few indeed, and the realists almost non-existent.

The causes are not far to seek. In a first awakening to the impact of desperate realities, an extreme reaction is the most likely result. Escape is most urgent, and hedonism most rampant, when reality hits hardest. Our lives have been and are being shaken—and we have sought sanctuary everywhere, while at the same time doubting if we would get it. The age is one of doubt, of denial, of frustration. The strident voice of denial can be heard over all others—indeed, but for a few notable exceptions ours could well be called the age of irreverence. It has become laughable to confess to any faith, or to an attachment to old ideals, yet the urgent need of something to cling to, a bulwark in this flood of reality, is everywhere, and most of us in

our secret souls jealously guard our cravings, spirit-hungers, and the shreds of such loyalties as have survived. Indeed, the normal channels being closed by the intense pressure of life, hard, unimaginative, exacting, garish, in short, *real*, our hungers have become more urgent within, and burst forth at the merest touch; the least emotional stimulus gives us an unbearable thrill. The appeal of such mystic poets as Mahadevi Varma and even such fatalists as 'Bachchan' can only be explained thus. In a healthier age, they could only have commanded a very limited appreciation, and their admirers would have been rudely put aside as eccentrics or neurotics.

And yet we are waking not only to reality but also to power—it is an age also of self-discovery. We are buying new lamps for old, and the wonder of it is that the genie inhabits the new lamp. Our soul is coming to a consciousness of great forces, we are tending towards a corporate national existence; our sympathies are widening and comprise the lowly as well as the distant. This is more obvious in prose and fiction; in poetry it is not so marked, but is coming surely, inevitably. One may wonder why this is so, because it is generally supposed, and rightly, that the poet is the first iconoclast, the vanguard of the protestants. If one may venture an explanation, this slackness may be ascribed to the poverty of criticism in India generally and in Hindi, in particular. We have no good critics, and almost no critical literature worth the name. Whatever old literature we had is now either inaccessible or otherwise rendered useless by the type of education we have received, which has cut us off from our own literary tradition without having given us a substitute. Even if a critical apparatus based on our traditions were available, we would probably have discovered that it was antiquated and unfit for use without considerable readjustment.

I will end this paper with a few words on the Aesthetes among our modern poets.

The aesthetic school comprises poets primarily engaged in a quest of beauty. The aesthete is obviously the person who does not face reality and who lives a protected and more or less innocuous life. He is intensely occupied with nature, with form and colour, and with the presentation of his own inner being in terms of the graceful and rhythmic aspect of nature. He sings of nature, yet his nature is not natural; by an unconscious selective process he chooses only those aspects of nature which conform to his aesthetic ideal and with which he can seek identification without losing his equanimity :—

## The Form

Whose splendour is reflected in the Dawn,  
Whose ornament is the fresh-blown spring,  
Whose garland is a chain of stars,  
Who wears a crown of the sun and the moon,  
Whose hair is clustered in clouds, and whose joy-tears  
are the drops of dew,  
Whose scented breath is the zephyr, mind the ocean,  
Whose play is the world of waves—  
Her must you bind in your tender arms, O Poet !

Nature as conflict, as elimination, as stern justice, Nature as a biological fact, is unknown to him. He does not resist, he is not a protestant, for all conflict is unaesthetic, and protest lacks grace. The aesthete invokes the past sometimes, but here again he invokes the beautiful, the poignant, the graceful in form

For an examination of the aesthetic tendency we may consider Sumitranandan Pant.

Pant seems to have drunk deep at the fountain of Wordsworth's poetry. He is a nature poet and as such he even has some of Wordsworth's faults—his often deliberate simplicity, the cultivated naivete which provided such an easy target for nineteenth century parodists. At its best, of course, this simplicity is an intimate revelation of personality in a child. The simple child naming that mountain 'the cloud-home', is almost a 'confidence' imparted to a sympathetic listener, and an indication of the poet's intimacy with nature. But generally it rouses a faint sense of ridicule in the listener.

Pant is nurtured on softness--he is one that has 'lain on the lilies of life.' He lacks resistance. In his poem *Sighs*, which, by the way, is a very flimsy story used as a pretext for an orgy of nature description, when his childhood affection is interfered with:

Love had hardly blossomed yet,  
The flush of shyness had not yet faded,  
When like a blight came suspicion  
And the new-blown bud withered.

Like many other poets of today, Pant sings of pain but his pain is not felt, it is imagined. He says:

The first poet must have been of the separated—  
And the first song must have burst forth from pain.

Even in dreaming he says :

**Comrade, let us think about dreams.**

Straying a little from the field of strict literary criticism, one

may make a few remarks about aesthetes in general. These are relevant in that they help us to a better understanding of the special qualities and limitations of the aesthetic poet.

The aesthete is generally a subnormal person. His passion is etherialised ( not sublimated ) to a degree which makes it unreal and even affected. The intense intellectual preoccupation with beauty is itself evidence of the fact that the passional quality is lacking. The libido does not accumulate, it continuously distributes itself in countless lesser attractions.

When I behold  
 The garden filling the flowercups with the wine of youth  
 To feed the honey-bee,  
 And the ripple like a young bride,  
 Wavering a little near the flowers on the bank  
 And then gliding on,  
 When I behold the moonlight lifting  
 Her thin rainbow-coloured gossamer veil of cloud,  
 It is a glimpse of your face, O my love,  
 That carries me away in a trance.

This, of course, rouses the old controversy : is great art possible without great passion ? The present writer wishes to assert, with all the emphasis he is capable of, that the fundamental quality of all great art is passion—passion, of course, in the highest sense of strong feeling backed by a directive will. Without it, a piece may be beautiful, but it will be the beauty of the delicate, weak-kneed, rickety child born before his time. This is what may be said of Pant's long and pretty *Ode to Cupid*.

Let us take an example. Sings Pant in *Woman* :

Woman,  
 I love the littlest atom of your being;  
 O frail form,  
 Your bosom is the home of all bliss.

Compare this merely graceful avowal with Tagore's majestic *Urvusi*, or even with the pagan Navin's:

Bound at last in my arms, you queen of all bonds!  
 Your proud disdain has thawed into sweet graciousness.  
 O my beautiful flower, whom I hold in my iron grasp,  
 See, my heart is welling up anew.  
 The burning breath of passion sweeps me off my feet  
 As you abandon yourself to my importunate desire!

and the failure of the aesthete is obvious.

The aesthete's libido centres round himself. Almost invariably he is a narcissist—an admirer of beauty as expressed in his own form. Pant's *Vina* affords several examples of this. This self-admiration, naturally enough, generates a self-esteem, a sort of superiority complex, from which, almost invariably again, all aesthetes suffer. Pant is no exception. Notice the tone of contempt for public taste in his preface to *Vina*: "Readers will probably find the present collection more to their taste than *Pullava* ; because in reality it is not half as good."

This is not to say that in moments of self-effacement he does not produce beautiful poetry. The vision of beauty slowly unveiling itself in:

Slowly you are opening the door of your divine abode,  
Every moment revealing your radiant form.  
O mother, when shall I see you face to face,  
You whose image is mirrored in the world ?

What has been said above about Pant as an aesthete and about the psychology of the aesthete in general is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of Suryakant Tripathi who writes under the pen-name Nirala. In fact the pitfalls to which the aesthete is liable show up more glaringly in his case. His is another case of artistic ability gone astray due to overweening self-esteem, of poetry sacrificed to a more or less deliberate attempt at originality. His earlier work was often very good, but later it began to show an irritated obstinacy in the conviction that the main poetic tradition had ossified. He joined the ranks of *les jeunes* who "throw bricks at imaginary Aunt Sallies who maintain that poetry must rhyme, that line-patterns must be regular, and that aeroplanes and complexes are taboo in literature."

Let us however recognise that his was another voice that rang for the freedom of poetry from rigid formalism.

Come into this half-blown lotus of my heart, O my love,  
Leave the narrow path of strict prosody.  
O slow-gaited one, that path is narrow and thorny,  
How could you ever go through ?  
The thorns would tear the hem of your robe.  
And your garland would be entangled.

And having given him due credit for this, let us say no more. *Nil nisi bonum*—and as a literary force, at any rate, Nirala is already dead.

## WHAT IS CHINESE RELIGION ?

Prof. Tan Yun-Shan

WHEN I first travelled in India, many Indian friends often asked me a very common and yet very embarrassing question : "What religion do you believe in ?" Not knowing how else to answer or evade the question, I replied : "I believe in Chinese Religion." But here again this kind of answer gave rise to another more difficult question, namely : "What is Chinese Religion ?"

Now "Chinese Religion" is an unfamiliar term, not only unknown to the foreigners but also never heard of even among our own Chinese people. When using that term, I myself felt the novelty of it, and yet I found that was the only proper answer. So my answer to the second question was : "Chinese Religion is Chinese Religion."

Such an answer might be justified logically, but the listener would certainly say, "It is no answer at all," and remain disappointed. And yet on my part, it was the only answer I could properly make. This is somewhat analogous to the case of Hinduism. Supposing I ask one of my Hindu friends, "What religion do you believe in ?" He may reply, "Hinduism". Then if I inquire of him again, "What is Hinduism ?" His reply at the moment might be either "Hinduism is Hinduism", or "Hinduism is the Religion of the Hindus." For, this kind of religion is so diverse and so complicated in its components that it cannot be briefly generalized in such a simple answer as, for example, "Christianity is the Religion founded by Jesus Christ," or "Islam is the Religion founded by Prophet Mohammed." But even these answers would hardly be acceptable as satisfactory to our Christian or Muslim friends. So, then, my answer as given above, though not perfectly clear, is yet understandable. It emphasises the absurdity of reducing to a simple formula the tangled complex of emotional reactions and intellectual attitudes that take root in a people's tradition and come to be called their religion. To think otherwise is to confuse the issue.

Many scholars, Chinese as well as foreign, uphold with one voice that the "religions" of China have all come from outside, such as Buddhism from India, Zoroastrianism from Persia, Islam from Arabia and Christianity from Europe and America, and that there is no

indigenous religion born or produced originally within the country itself. The popular form of "Confucianism", they boldly assert, is no religion in reality, for Confucius was a philosopher, a moralist, a statesman, and an educationist, but no religionist. They say that the thoughts and teachings of Confucius are ethical philosophy, political theory and educational principle but not religious philosophy. With regard to "Taoism" also they believe that it is non-religious, for Laotse is not, as popularly believed, the creator of "Taoism". The prevalent name of "Taoism" actually began to appear with Chang-Tao-Ling, sometime in the latter Han Dynasty in Chinese History, that is, about the Second Century in the Christian Era. The Taoistic art of "witchcrafts" and "magical writings" is absolutely different from the teachings of Laotse. In truth, Laotse is purely a philosopher but no religionist, and the contents of "Taoism", too, are far from religion. If these views were correct, then China having no indigenous religion could naturally have no such thing as "Chinese Religion." And, again, there are many scholars who regard it a merit and an honour to claim that China is devoid of any religion. They think that a religion, as the very name suggests, cannot be free from the tint of superstition. It is illiberal internally and exclusive externally, not only imprisoning the free thoughts of the people but also arousing hatred and struggles inside and outside the various sects. As China has no religion of her own creation, so the Chinese people can be quite free in cogitation and judgment and have neither the habit of bigotry nor the practice of exclusion. They have been spared, so far, the calamity of religious wars, and have been able to welcome every visiting religion from outside and assimilate it by a gradual process of harmonization. It is, as they say, pleasant as well as fortunate for China to possess these good characteristics in her culture. The late Mr. Liang Chi-Chao, a great modern Chinese scholar, was the foremost of those optimists who held this view. On the other hand, there are pessimists who regard it a national disgrace for China to have no proper religion, and exclaim with sorrow that our people are inferior to other people, and our country is not so good as other countries. With all these different points of views, I cannot and dare not agree. I think China has actually an indigenous religion and that is "Chinese Religion," of which Confucius and Laotse are both the greatest sages and saints.

But before we try to understand this "Chinese Religion" it is advisable to have first a clear conception of religion. Great



philosophers and religionists, such as Kant, Fichte, Spinoza, Hegel, Schleirmacher and many others have at different times worked out various definitions of religion, which it is unnecessary for me to quote here. I should like to define religion, for the purposes of my thesis here, in two ways : one in a strict sense and the other in a broad sense. The former may be called "Strict Religion" ; and the latter, "Broad Religion." The Strict Religion must comprise at least five definite conditions: first, a definite Prophet to follow—as Jesus Christ of Christianity and Prophet Mohammed of Islam ; second, a definite Supreme Being to worship—as God of Christianity and Allah of Islam ; third, a definite communal organization—as Church of the Christians and Mosque of the Muslims ; fourth, a definite set of Ascetic Rules to observe—as the Ten Commandments of the Christians and the four fundamental Institutions of the Muslims ; and fifth, a definite form of Ceremony to practise—as the Prayer of both the Christians and the Muslims. Such Strict Religion may also be entitled "Constitutional Religion". As for religion in the broad sense, the above-mentioned conditions are by no means essential to its existence. In Chinese language, the term "Religion" is composed of two characters : first, "Tsung", meaning "Respect" ; next "Chiao", meaning "Teaching". When put together, they mean "Respect for good teachings". That is to say, the teachings of ancient sages and wise men are highly worthy of popular respect and observance, as guiding factors in their daily lives. In course of time, these teachings have drawn round them the firm and solid faith of the masses and have become in themselves a strong and supreme power. So from this point of view, it follows that every great and valuable teaching, if it comes to be accepted with awe by the people and operates as a living force in their lives, may be called a religion. The teaching of Lord Buddha is a religion, that of Jesus Christ a religion ; that of Prophet Mohammed a religion ; that of Laotse, a religion ; and that of Confucius also a religion. In modern India, the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna has come to be a religion ; so also the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi may come to be a religion, if it is not already so regarded. If my memory does not deceive me, I believe Mr. Bertrand Russell, when lecturing in China in 1920-1921, said that the principles of Lenin had become a sort of religion in Soviet Russia. And one American scholar called the San-Min Principle of the late Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, the founder of the Chinese Republic, "A Political Bible" and hence the Religion of China. The so-called

definite religious conditions are merely a kind of means for a religion to carry out its gospel in effect. Though the form of such means may be different in different religions, yet the fundamental spirit of all religions is the same at the root.

Keeping this twofold aspect of religion in perspective, we may now proceed to understand something of the significance and quality of the Chinese Religion and may see how it has come to be what it is. As China is one of the oldest civilized countries in the world, so the origin of her religion is equally remote and ancient. Territorially also, China is one of the largest countries and the contents of her religion are equally complex. In tracing the origin and evolution of the religions of the various races, we find they have in most cases evolved from "Totem" to "Worship", from "Fetichism" to "Theism", and from "Polytheism" to "Monotheism." But the Chinese religion seems to have followed a different line. In ancient China, there seemed to be no such thing as "Totem", and throughout the old Chinese classics and history, no apparent traces of "Totem" can be found clearly. Though there existed some aspects similar to it to some extent, yet they were different in nature from the "Totemism" of other peoples. As for the worship of living beings such as animals and plants, China has had none of it. From remote antiquity to the present day the Chinese have been worshipping "Tien" and "Ti" or Heaven and Earth, and such natural phenomena as the Sun, Moon, Stars, Cloud, Wind, Thunder, etc., and such earthly phenomena as Mountains, Rivers, and the Native Soils. In the past, the emperors, ministers, and the subjects had to worship these natural phenomena at different seasons in a prescribed form of sacrificial ceremony ; and there were appointed, too, special officials to supervise the sacrifices. The Sovereign Emperor, when crowned, must worship Heaven and Earth ; the feudal kings, Mountains and Rivers ; the common masses, the Native Soils. The Emperor was also obliged to travel personally for some time or send forth a deputy on particular occasions to offer sacrifices to certain sacred Mountains and Rivers. When any extraordinary event happened there would then be a specific sacrifice. For instance, the Sun must be offered sacrifice in case of a solar eclipse ; the Moon, in case of a lunar eclipse ; and the Cloud, the Wind, the Thunder, and the Rain, in case of flood or drought. Besides these, different sacrifices accorded with the periodical rotation of the four seasons, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. To all these natural phenomena they assigned

semi-divine and semi-personal attributes. In other words, they regarded them as personified gods with feelings and volition. And of the natural phenomena, Heaven was the mightiest and supreme, which they sometimes also called "Shang-Ti", the Highest King, or "Tien-Ti", the Heavenly King. They thought that the whole cosmos, natural laws, mankind, and every being were all created and set in order by Heaven. It is stated in Old Chinese Classics that "Heaven produces all the peoples with things and laws". Even all the vicissitudes of human life, weal and woe, fortune and misfortune, were considered to be dependent upon the will and command of Heaven. And in old Chinese books we often find such statements as: "Heaven favours the good-doer with hundreds of fortunes, and punishes the evil-doer with hundreds of misfortunes". The Emperors styled themselves "Tien-Tzu" or Son of Heaven, for they believed or were tempted to believe that they came by order of Heaven to be Emperors and to rule over the people. That is why in old Chinese historical records it is said that "Heaven orders Wen-Wang to be king", and that "The Son of Heaven acts as a parent of the people and is the sovereign master of the world." Instances of similar nature are too numerous to be quoted. To describe this ideation, it is very hard to get any exact technical term in a foreign language; we may approximately call it "Nature Worship", or "Henotheism" as a branch of "Polytheism", but should not confuse it with "Fetichism". It resembles very much the religious attitude of "the Vedic Period" in ancient India, and the dates of their appearance also more or less correspond to each other.

Every religion has a sort of myth about the creation of the world, such as the "Genesis" of the Old Testament which says that God created heaven and earth and all beings in seven days. Such myths are common in China, too. It is popularly believed by the Chinese people that "Pan-Ku", a humanized semi-god with seven hands and eight feet, and eighteen thousand years old, was the Creator who first gave form to the universe and every being. This great work of "Pan-Ku" is similar to that of Brahma. But the Chinese myth is only found in popular anecdotes and cheap novels and not in serious Classics and orthodox history, so that it may be regarded as a popular fairy tale rather than as a religious myth, or it may be a popular version of the Indian story of Brahma. And, again, there are stories of "Birth effected by Spirit" in every religion. For instance, *Maya*, dreaming of a White Elephant, gave birth to

the Buddha ; Mary was influenced by the Holy Ghost and the result was the birth of Jesus Christ. China is also rich in such fanciful tales. It is said that the mother of Huang-Ti was touched by a brilliant lightning, and then gave birth to Huang-Ti ; the mother of Emperor Yao, touched by a Red Dragon, brought to life Yao ; and the mother of Emperor Shun, seeing a beautiful rainbow, generated the illustrious son Shun. The great philosopher Laotse, it is said, was born after his mother had seen a Shooting Star ; the great sage Confucius, after his mother's dream of a Black God. Such tales are too numerous to be mentioned. But as they appear only in records of doubtful sources and not in any authentic classics, they have drawn no faith from the people. Most religions, in the beginning, are also more or less affected by divination or necromancy or fortune-telling. In China the art of divination was rather well developed ; important affairs, public as well as private, were usually first put to a sort of divination so as to see whether the intended affair was lucky or ominous. The male diviner was named "Hsi" or "Wizard", and the female, "Wu" or "Witch", but generally they were indiscriminately called "Wu-Hsi" or "Necromancers". Mention of this sort of art can even be found in ancient classics and historical accounts, and the oldest Chinese classical book, "Yi-Ching" or "Philosophy of Change", is regarded by some people as a sacred book of divination. In reality, however, the book of "Yi-Ching" is the most ancient and most valuable book of philosophy, somewhat similar in nature to the Vedas of India. Its fundamental significance is an exposition of the natural mystery of the universe, and divination has very little, if at all, to do with its underlying ideas.

The aspects mentioned above were the general aspects of the Chinese Religion in the earliest stage. In course of time, the Chinese Religion has gradually transmitted itself from the worship of natural phenomena and gods to that of human beings. And this worship may be, again, classified into two kinds : first, the worship of Great Sages and Heroes ; and second, the worship of deceased Ancestors. The former kind of worship precedes the latter and may be regarded as a prelude to it. Besides, these ancestors were at first, in fact, no other than the Great Sages and Heroes, for the family system had not yet developed to that extent. So it is said in one old classical book, "All beings are originated from Heaven ; all mankind, from one ancestry" ; and "The remote ancestors are our benefactors and patrons". It was not till the latter half of the Chou

Dynasty known as the "Eastern Chou Ages" ( 770-247 B. C. ), when great sages and philosophers like Laotse and Confucius made their appearance and human knowledge was immensely enriched that the Chinese Religion underwent a striking revolution. The first attack on the traditional worship of Tien and Ti or Heaven and Earth was made by Laotse who said, "Neither Tien nor Ti is benevolent, for they make fools of all beings and let them devour one another." Lao-tse aimed at exploring the natural phenomena of the universe with philosophical reasonings and inferences in order to establish a profound "Natural Philosophy". He said on one occasion, "Man copies Earth ; Earth, Heaven ; Heaven, *Tao* ( Process ) ; and *Tao*, Nature"; and on another, "Heaven, Earth and all beings are born of Existentness ; and Existentness, of Nothingness"; and on a third, "Previous to the formation of Heaven and Earth there exists something, shapeless and secret, independent without change and rotatory without fatigue, which may be the sole Mother of the Universe ; not knowing how to nominate it, I choose to name it 'Tao' or the Great Process." It is, then, clear that Laotse regarded the universe and all beings as the resultant effect of a natural process, beyond both the power of humanity and any creative will of Heaven or God. Hence, the best way for human life is to follow Nature and to be harmonized with it ; otherwise, artificialities in life will not only do harm to Nature but also lead to misfortunes and disturbances. That is why Laotse emphasized, "Nature is natural and cannot be artificially brought about by force ; to force it into existence is to destroy it ; to cling to it is to lose it."

With regard to Confucius, it may be said that he devoted himself to the study of things human, and paid extensive attention to actual life, but never seriously thought of, or even talked much about, Heaven and Earth, Natural Phenomena, Gods and Spirits, etc. When one of his best disciples, Chi-Lu, inquired of him, "How to serve the Gods ?" he replied, "You don't know how to serve Man yet, how can you ask about serving the Gods ?" When questioned a second time by the same disciple about Death, he again answered, "You don't know much about Life yet, how can you expect to know about Death ?" On another occasion, one disciple by the name of Tzu-Kung asked the Master if the dead were conscious ; he answered : "If I say the dead are conscious, I am afraid offsprings may neglect their living parents and only observe the formal rites at their death ; if I say they are unconscious, I am afraid posterity may forget to bury

and sacrifice to their deceased ancestors. If you, my dear student, want to know the consciousness or unconsciousness of the dead it is never too late to know it after your own death." And, again, one disciple called Jan-You once asked the Master whether it was impossible to know of what existed before Heaven and Earth came into being ; his reply was, "Not impossible: the past is the same as the present." "What do you mean ?" interrogated the disciple in doubt again ; Confucius continued, "With Heaven and Earth, there is no past nor present, and no beginning nor end. Were there no children first, could it be possible to have any children at all ?" From this kind of teaching we can easily see that it was things human and real events that Confucius studied, discussed and taught. But it must not be understood that Confucius ever denied the existence of Heaven and Earth, Gods and Spirits, or had no observation or conception of the natural phenomena. He said once, "A virtuous man has three awes : first, awe for Heaven's decree ; second, awe for great men ; third, awe for the saint's words." At another time, he expressed his opinion on offering sacrifices, saying first, "When worshipping a God, one must feel as if He were visibly present" ; and then, "If I did not partake in the ceremony of a sacrifice, it would be the same as no sacrifice at all." His purpose in saying this, however, was only to impress upon the popular mentality something which is really superior to the individual, so that the people might always have a sense of awe and respect and never be poisoned by egoistic pride. He wanted to make the people appreciate the real value of awe for Heaven's Will and that of offering sacrifices to Spirits ; so he emphasized, "Worship the Gods and Spirits but keep away from them." For, such things cannot be performed with any utilitarian motive ; their original significance and value will be lost. In short, the teaching of Confucius is that the whole universe and every being are constantly changing, and that the most essential aspect for human life is the present Reality. It is only through the present that one can trace the past and hope to foresee the future, and it is only through things human that one can hope to extend one's knowledge about Heaven and Earth, Gods and Spirits and every Being. Therefore, in teaching man to be loyal and filial, faithful and moral, to know propriety and righteousness, to value shame and purity, and to practise all ways of self-culture, Confucius aimed at reaching the goal of Perfect Beauty and Perfect Good by harmonising in the Natural Universe all beings, and humanity through virtuous conduct of daily life. It is this ethical

ideal that forms the very core of Chinese Religion and builds up at the same time a very complete and beautiful ethical philosophy of life. And for this reason, it is called by some "The Teaching of Ethics", or by some "Yu-Chiao" ( the Teaching of Scholars ), and still by others "Confucianism" ; but in reality, the most proper nomination of it should be "The Chinese Religion".

Since the Dynasties of Chin and Han, foreign religions have gradually marched into China and greatly influenced the primary Chinese Religion. Among these, Buddhism came first, then Christianity, and then Islam. But that which influenced the Chinese religion most was Buddhism. Entering China nearly two thousand years ago, it has now become a Second National Religion, mingled and assimilated in the Chinese Religion in a mutual progress. The Chinese Religion is fertilized by Buddhism and Buddhism, in turn, is enriched by the Chinese Religion. With respect to Christianity which came into China soon after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, it was first called in Chinese "Chin-Chiao", probably due to different pronunciation or incorrect translation of the word "Christian". Originally it was brought into the country by the Jews but produced very little effect. For the last few centuries, however, it has been revived and preached with great effect by first European and then American missionaries and is today fairly influential among the newly-educated people in urban communities. As regards Islam, it was transmitted into China soon after the passing away of Mohammed, and became one of the important factors in the Chinese Religion. In the recent history of China, the position of Muslims is rather striking and worthy of attention. In addition to these three great foreign religions, there were also introduced into China, Zoroastrianism and other minor creeds ; but producing very little or no effect upon the people, they died out gradually.

The Chinese Religion, however, in spite of the influence on it of such powerful foreign elements, is still able to maintain its own original shape and fundamental spirit. The foreign religions, once domiciled in China, have become more or less "Chinese Naturalised" and may be called parts of the Chinese Religion. For instance, the Buddhism of China can be styled "Chinese Buddhism" ; the Christianity of China, "Chinese Christianity" ; and the Islam of China, "Chinese Islam". The fact that China can contain and absorb, harmonize and utilize, all the various foreign religions so as to let them co-exist without jealousy and conflict is

notably characteristic of the Chinese Religion. That is why it can be so deep, rich, and extensive in volume and content.

At present, the manifest features of the Chinese Religion are quite complicated. In respect of form, the masses of the people sacrifice to the great Sages, Heroes and Ancestors on the one hand, and worship Heaven and Earth, Gods, Spirits, Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ, and Prophet Mohammed on the other. Almost in every family there is set up in the upper wall of the hall a holy Ancestral Shrine before which a lamp is lit and incense burnt every morning and every evening. On the occasion of marriage or funeral or any other seasonal, festive occasion there must be offered to the ancestors a formal sacrifice. Among the families of the same surname, which represents the lineage of kinship, there are common "Family Temples" in which carefully prepared Sacrifice-feasts must be provided on the birthdays of the ancestors or on other seasonal festivals. In the villages, there are Buddhist monasteries and oracular altars of other gods where the peasants, especially women, usually worship and offer sacrifices. In the cities there are mosques and churches for the believers to hold their service and prayer in respectively. But what is peculiarly funny is that sometimes the images of the gods and saints of different religions are consecrated in one and the same temple. In respect of spirit, the general folks of the nation accept the Ethical Ideals on the one hand, but believe in Fatalism and Necromancy on the other ; study the doctrines and principles of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam on the one side, but welcome the various revolutionary theories and natural sciences on the other. Though all these appear contradictory, actually they cohere in a sort of natural unity. For Nature and Universe, Humanity and Society, are by no means simple and one-sided ; they are vast and complex and have many sides and aspects. The sea, for example, is not the home of any one single fish, nor the mountain of any one single animal. In fact, nothing save the petty bigotry and prejudice of man is incapable of being unified and assimilated in this world. In one old Chinese classic entitled "The Great Learning", we find a very fine proverb : "All beings live co-existently without injuring one another ; all orbits lie parallel without colliding against each other." The complexity of the Chinese Religion is just the concrete expression of this spirit.

From what has been said in the foregoing paragraphs, we can at least have a general idea of the significance, quality, and the evolution



of the Chinese Religion. Now, for the sake of clearness, *the essential points of this religion may be summed up as below :—*

First : The Chinese Religion, of which ethical virtue is the centre, emphasizes real human things, and actual ordinary life, while its spiritual aim is "Perfect Beauty" and "Perfect Good" in human life. It is expressed best in the old Chinese classics : "The way of the Great Learning is to illuminate the illustrious virtue, to enlighten the people, and to realise Perfect Good"; and "The end must be Perfect Beauty and Perfect Good." As Mr. Bertrand Russell has put it : "In Art they (the Chinese) aim at being exquisite, in Life reasonable."

Second : How to realise Perfect Beauty and Perfect Good is based upon the cultivation of the individual personality. It is laid down as a sort of rule in one Chinese classical book, "The Ancients who wished to brighten the illustrious virtue in the world, first ordered well their own States. Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families ; wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons ; wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their minds ; wishing to rectify their minds, they first purified their volitions ; wishing to purify their volitions, they first extended their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge depended upon the study of things. Things having been studied, knowledge became perfect ; knowledge being perfect, their volitions were then purified, their volitions being purified, their minds were then rectified ; their minds being rectified, their persons were then cultivated ; their persons being cultivated, their families were then regulated ; their families being regulated, their States were then well ordered ; their States being well ordered, the whole world could then be made tranquil and happy."

Third : Humanity is a life of harmonious collectivity, not a life of exclusive individuality. The ultimate aim of humanity must be to achieve the well-being of all mankind ; neither the individual, nor the race, nor the State is to be the end of life. It is said in another Chinese classic, "In the progression of the Great Natural Process, the whole world is free and common to all. The wise and the able should be chosen to rule ; faithfulness and peacefulness cultivated by and maintained among all. Man must not only love his own parents and endear his own children, but also endeavour to give to the aged rest and comfort, make the grown-ups work and serve, and help the young to grow in body and mind. The widower, the widow, the orphan, the bereft, the disabled, and the sick should be

offered proper treatment and carefully looked after. Every man has his duty, and every woman her place in the scheme of human life. Natural resources should be drawn out of the earth and utilized, but not necessarily for private property ; personal abilities should be exerted from the body and mind and exercised, but not necessarily for selfish purposes. Thus, there will be no chance for conspiracy and intrigue, nor rise of theft and robbery, and every home can be safe with open gates at night. This is called 'Ta-Tung' or 'Great Harmonization'."

Fourth: The sublime end of "Ta-Tung" does not stop with the Great Harmonization of Humanity only but also aims at the unification of the entire universe and every being. In old Chinese classical books we find various maxims of this teaching, such as: first, "All men are our brethren and all beings our friends"; then, "Heaven and Earth co-exist with man, and all beings are one"; then, "What is meant by sincerity is the perfect cultivation not only of the individual ego but also of everything ;" then, "Great is the teaching of sages ; cultivating all beings profusely and communicating with Heaven sublimely, how glorious and magnificent it is !" And, again, "Heaven gives sweet dew, earth supplies delicious water ; mountains produce wood for making implements ; rivers afford archaeological materials for study ; the phoenix and the unicorn ( the popularly-believed fabulous bird and animal ) play in the field and forest ; the divine Tortoise and the kindly Dragon enjoy in the deep ; and all other living beings, viviparous as well as oviparous, can be observed and investigated."

From the first two points, the Chinese Religion may be called the "Teaching of Ethics" or "Teaching of Humanism", and from the last two points, it may be called the "Teaching of Ta-Tung or Great Harmonization" or "Universalism". But, consistently with traditional customs and practices, I should like to call it "Chinese Religion".

## COMPENSATION

IN a land of windmills  
We wandered through a long and moonlit lane.  
I said to Margaret, "It is such hours  
That compensate the folly and the pain  
Of dreaming and awaking."  
There were sad horses standing in the fields  
With tearful, eloquent eyes ! and they were shaking  
Their long and heavy manes. A mist arose  
Beneath the motion of their steel-shod hooves,  
And wreathed the indolent moon and all the stars.

Ranald Newson.



*By Rabindranath*



## THE HINDI-URDU PROBLEM

M. Ziauddin

STRANGE as it may appear, the honour of the discovery of the Hindi-Urdu problem belongs to the English scholars of these languages. With them the discussion, however, was merely academic ; with us it has developed into a disastrous communal issue. Whatever might have been the nature of the circumstances in which it first appeared, its roots, no doubt, lay always deep in the fertile soil of our class-egotism. The solution of this problem cannot precede the solution of that deplorable communalism to which we owe the present nightmare of mutual suspicion and hatred. In fact, the Hindi-Urdu problem in its present aspect is only an offshoot of the original problem that was created by the collision of Hindu and Muslim cultures. There is much confusing of facts with regard to this question. Identifying dialect with religion—our common weakness—parties have tried to realize their political goal by working up the fanaticism of the cultured.

Difference in language, as we all know, means difference that is much more fundamental than the mere difference in religion can ever mean. Hatred for each other amongst co-religionists belonging to different language-areas is a patent fact. Provincial feeling, nurtured by exclusive cultivation of different languages, separates men much more effectively than a common religion ever joined them. A country stands out as a unit more because of the unity of language than of religion. Hence, any movement that aims at emphasising the slight differences that exist between Hindi and Urdu, deserves the strongest condemnation ; at least, from those who profess themselves to be nationalists. A language is a vehicle of culture and culture an expression of the united effort of a people at realizing the best in them. A language is, figuratively speaking, a centre of gravity round which all the other cultural elements revolve to create a certain type of culture.

As a result of the close contact of the Hindus and Moslems, a language had developed corresponding to the new blending of their cultures. It was based on the Aryan vernacular of Delhi and the country around it, with a variable percentage of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words *scattered* in it. Though the basic grammatical struc-

ture of this language was entirely that of the Aryan vernacular called Khari-boli ( literally, the rough or uncultured dialect ), it assimilated Persian and Arabic nouns, and is known to us today as Urdu. The English people gave it the name Hindostani. Based on the native vernacular of the Capital, the successor to the Sauraseni of the Rajput courts of northern India before the Moslem conquest, with the Perso-Arabic *nouns* scattered in it, it is, in fact, the happy fruit of the union of the Hindu Moslem cultures, a product of Hindi and Persian, and represents in its structure the harmony of cultural relations and forms the very basis on which the national consciousness of India must grow.

That a language, though called differently, cannot be divided on the basis of religious differences, is clear from the fact that "not only is the most popular Urdu novelist a Hindu, but the statistics of the vernacular press show that this form of the language is widely used by Hindus."<sup>1</sup> The compiler of the Census Report of India for 1921, remarks : "Hindostani and Urdu are dialects of Western Hindi ; but the ordinary individual knows little of such distinctions and the words are often used indiscriminately with an interchangeable significance. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in the schedules for 1901 and 1911, "Western Hindi or Eastern Hindi, Bihari or Pahari, Urdu or Hindi, have been lumped together as Hindostani for the purpose of the census statement, it being left to the linguists to separate out the languages and dialects as best as they can."<sup>3</sup>

What divides India is the diversity of its languages and dialects. We are at present in need of a science that would give us a method of uniting the innumerable linguistic sections, hitherto only analysed, into broader groups of integral unity. Instead, we are trying our best to divide Hindostani into Hindi and Urdu on communal basis—the basis has to be communal, for there is discoverable no other.

The Hindostani language, of which Urdu is the literary form, is not exclusively the creation of the Moslems. The Hindus are as much responsible for its creation and development as the Moslems. Hindu contribution to Urdu literature is of vital importance to the language itself. Some of the best and most widely read authors, many of them recognized authorities in the use of Urdu idiom, are Hindus. A

1. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. II, p. 575.

2. *Census of India*, 1921, vol. I, p. 195.

3. *Ibid.* p. 195.

student who wishes to study the genuine Urdu, cannot possibly do so without going through the voluminous literary productions of Ratan Nath Sarshar. The literature of both the Hindus and Moslems of the Punjab is almost entirely in Urdu. Urdu is, indeed, as much a Moslem tongue as Hindu. One cannot but agree with Pandit Ram Nares Tripathi ( the author of the well-known Hindi work *Kavita Kaumudi* ), who says : "The educated Moslems know that Urdu has reached its present stage of development because of its Hindu-writers."<sup>1</sup> Again, Hindus have been more responsible for the introduction of Persian and Arabic words in the vernacular than the Moslems. Sir G. A. Grierson, Sir Charles Lyall and Mr. Beams, at least, are of such an opinion. "It is curious, moreover," writes Sir G. A. Grierson, "that the extreme Persianization of Hindustani is, as Sir Charles Lyall rightly points out, not the work of the conquerors ignorant of the tongue of the people. On the contrary, the Urdu language took its rise in the efforts of the ever pliable Hindu to assimilate the language of his rulers."<sup>2</sup>

The Urdu language was to Hindus and Moslems just like the new dress they wore. It was not purely Aryan or Semitic in style ; like the current music, it was not purely Indian or Persian in its nature. The Persian language to the Hindu was what the English language is to-day to both Hindus and Moslems, with this difference that the Persian speaking people lived next door to the Hindus, shared their life and thought, sorrow and happiness, much more closely than the English do. The invasion of English words in our daily speech can give us a fair idea of the extent of Persianization that Hindi dialects, and Bengali, Gujrati, Marhatti, Sindhi, Punjabi and Kashmiri had undergone, before the advent of the English. In northern India, a few generations ago, as is the case to a great extent even today, the cultured people spoke and wrote in the same Urdu. Today the Moslems themselves are no longer as familiar with Arabic and Persian as they once were, and the number of those who study these as their second language is fast decreasing ; nevertheless, what they have inherited of the Persian vocabulary, mostly through their religious literature and Urdu translations of Persian and Arabic fiction and works on Philosophy and Art, could not possibly be given up with the entrance of the English in India. The link that had joined the Hindus

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1. *Kavita Kaumudi*, Pt. I, p. 74.

2. *Linguistic Survey*, Vol. I, Pt. I, p. 165, *A Comparative Grammar of the Aryan Languages*. p. 30.



and Moslems, the study of the Persian language as their common second tongue, being now impaired, it will take time for the proper adjustment to take place in their languages.

Excepting the religious literature of the Moslems, and that of the well-known Persian-drunk authors, as far as my information regarding the development of Urdu literature goes, I feel sure that Urdu had struck the happy balance between the literary and the colloquial styles long ago. Only such a balanced language is the standard that the majority of Urdu writers try to follow. Most writers of Persianized prose, yet alive, are finding it positively difficult to continue writing in that style. For example, even such a prominent writer as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in whom the Persianization of Urdu prose had reached its climax, has, in his latest work--a commentary on the Koran--shown himself to be developing an unmistakable preference for the simple and the colloquial.

When all is said and considered about the Persianization of the Indian Moslems' language I wish to draw the attention of my readers to the fact that the majority of the Moslems being Hindu converts to Islam, they have their roots securely fixed in their native vernaculars, and, therefore, nobody need now be afraid of their taking up Greek as their mother-tongue. That the Urdu language has remained in its structure as Indian as it originally was, is, on the one hand, a proof of the successful attempt of the newcomers to own the dialect of the people, and, on the other, a proof of the Indian's attempt to assimilate Arabic and Persian words in his dialect. That the Indian blood is not so faithless to its racial instincts and linguistic heritage, as the allegations of some critics seem to assert, is proved, if by nothing else, by the distinctive character of Islam in India, and by the native purity of the Moslem vernaculars.

The Khari dialect being an uncultured tongue of the masses, it, like the rest of the vernaculars spoken in India at the time when the Moslems raided the country, had no literary tradition. The learned pandits, as in other provinces so in the Punjab and Delhi, used Sanskrit for their literary work. When the Moslems came and settled down in the country they learnt the vernaculars that were spoken in the bazaars. As they had no responsibility of preserving the literary conventions of the country, they forthwith began to compose songs and sing with the masses in their own dialects. Thus the vernacular of Delhi became the language of the rulers of the country.

Amir Khusru, one of the greatest poets who wrote in Persian

language, used the bazaar language of Delhi in some of his vernacular poems, and thus elevated the rude dialect of the capital to the dignity of a literary language. When this poet went to Ajodhya, he composed in the Awadhi dialect of that part of the country ( which Tulsidas followed in style and metre in his *Ramayana* later on ) and raised that dialect too to the honour of a literary tongue. This poet, by using these two dialects and also the Braj Bhasha in his poems, introduced the lyricism of the Persian *ghazal* into Indian poetry. This, the first national poet of the new India, also humanized the general religious trend of the folk-poetry composed mostly by religious reformers.

Malik Muhammad Jaisi who wrote his *Padmawat* in 1540 A. D. is the first poet who finally succeeded in establishing the literary standard of the language of Oudh. This poet, as Sir G. A. Grierson writes : "... stands out as a conspicuous, and almost solitary, example of what the Hindu mind can do when freed from the trammels of literary and religious custom."<sup>1</sup> His *Padmawat* is "the first poem and almost the only one written in the Gaudian vernacular on an original subject. I do not know a work more deserving of hard study . . . it being couched in the *veriest language of the people*."<sup>2</sup> In the Punjabi, Sindhi and Kashmiri languages, too, the foremost poets have been Moslems. Lala Sita Ram and J. Mohan Verma admit that the credit of setting the shape of epic poetry in Hindi goes back to Muslims.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Ram Naresh Tripathi remarks : "I would like to know how many Hindu authors did that service which the Hindi Literature has received from Moslems ? Where are those Hindu Poets of Hindi whom we may compare with Rahim and Ras Khan ?"<sup>4</sup>

Words of Perso-Arabic origin, we would do well to bear in mind, do not stand today on the same level as those of Sanskrit. Urdu, by virtue of its strong colloquial bias and attachment to the idiom of the people, particularly that of the women, abhors original purity of words, be they Semitic or Aryan in origin. The reason why so many Persian and Arabic words are current in Urdu, if only with a doubt of the correctness of pronunciation about them and almost always in a sense which is far removed from the original

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1. *The Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* pp. 15, 18, XVIII.

2. *Ibid.* p. 15. Italics are mine.

3. *Selections from Hindi Literature*, Vol. VI, Pt. II, p. vii.

4. *Kavita Kaumadi* Pt. I, p. 74.

sense of the word, is that Persian was only a hundred and odd years before as current a speech in India, if not more so, as English is today. This Perso-Arabic vocabulary is used in Urdu, as in any other spoken dialect of India, because it is still current and alive. Not that there are no pedants in Urdu with a fanatical attachment to Persian words, but the charge of pedantry against Urdu, as a language, is not valid. Our connection with Persian literature ought to be encouraged as it broadens our relation with the Eastern people. The more we absorb the Persian and Arabic vocabulary the farther we shall go in realising our greater unity with the living East and deeper will be our relation of common humanity. Urdu script might too be considered a means of binding India with the western Asia.

Urdu, being an Aryan speech, Sanskrit words in their colloquial form are frequent in it. Such words form about 70 per cent. of its vocabulary, while its grammar is entirely Indian. It is not therefore the Sanskrit element that is so much objected to in Urdu, as the form in which these words are put. Urdu accepts Sanskrit words, as it does Arabic, Persian and English, when they get the currency stamp of colloquial use. Hindus have written most of their religious literature, original translations and adaptations, of the *Gita Mahatam*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Shiva Puran*, *Ganesht Puran*, *Janki Bijay*, etc., in Urdu language and script. These works contain such words as are peculiar to Hindu religion, but these are used, as a rule, in their well-known colloquial forms, with their Hindustani pronunciation, and Moslems do not find any difficulty in understanding them. The use of such colloquial religious terms does not change the nature of the language. It remains the same Urdu. In short, Urdu was and still continues to be the religious and literary language of the Hindus, as much as it is the religious and literary language of the Moslems. The colloquial sounds and manners of pronunciation are so different in Urdu that Sanskrit words with their original pronunciation seem to stand apart as high priests unapproachable to the vulgar masses. In a language like literary Hindi, it is of course different.

When the Moslems began to write and compose in the vernacular of Delhi, they had no vernacular model of poetry before them which they could copy. It would not be true to say that there was one and they did not care to adopt it. Sanskrit had its most elaborate system of Prosody and Rhetoric, but the vernaculars about Delhi had none

of these artifices. The *doha* and the *chaupai*, composed by religious reformers, covered almost all the field of poetry. Earlier Urdu poets used both of these. But a writer of quatrains ( not to speak of couplets ), even if he be a Khayyam, was never considered a poet at all, according to the highly sophisticated standard of poetry set up by Persian poets. We must understand that at that time the Persian language was considered one of the few most civilized languages of the world, and second to none in literary achievement. The rude dialect of the capital of India could not do better than adopt the Persian models of poetry and the system of its prosody with which its patrons were quite familiar. There was neither prose nor poetry in the original dialect of Delhi. Its literature is either Urdu or Hindustani, and only in this form, that is, the Urdu or Hindustani form of the language, both Hindus and Moslems have contributed. To quote Sir. G. A. Grierson :

"Hindi has rarely been used for anything but prose. Attempts at employing it for poetry have only resulted in derision. The Hindu poetry in the Western Hindi language is almost all in Braj Bhakha. When Urdu or ordinary Hindustani is employed for poetry it becomes Rekhta. . . . Of the dialects of Western Hindi, Braj Bhakha and Hindustani are the ones which have received most literary culture."<sup>1</sup>

The poetical works of Urdu poets bear evidence of the attempts they made at reconciling and adjusting their metres with those of the Braj Bhasha. Some later poets like Mir Taqi, Insha, and Nazir Akbarabadi, etc., have really succeeded in composing poems in Indian metres. A poet would be the last person to object to a metre on religious grounds. No sooner the Hindi ( i.e. Indian ) metres were discovered, Urdu poets tried their hand at it. These experiments are still carried on and even South Indian metres have not escaped their attention.

It is true that much of Sir Muhammad Iqbal's poetry can certainly be cited as an Indian variety of Persian rather than Urdu. With the exception of a few simple poems, the language of his poetry is extremely artificial ; indeed, as artificial and unnatural as the Sanskritized Hindi prose of a Benares pandit. Persianization of Urdu prose and poetry is due to the pedantry of the cultured Moslem and Hindu writers of it. These high-brow litterateurs of the Urdu tongue have done more harm to the language and its literature than

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1. *Indian Antiquary*, Jan 1903, p. 16.

any body else. For these people, being able to draw freely from their Perso-Arabic stock, have cared little to learn their vernacular well. They do not realize that Urdu is an Aryan tongue and not Semitic. Words of Semitic origin can be accepted in it, but the preponderance of these *does* spoil its genuine Indian atmosphere. Only those foreign words should be used in it which have been thoroughly digested by the language. Urdu is not the language of a few scholars who can use Perso-Arabic words with facility. Persian, being no longer the literary medium of the country, acquaintance with Arabic and Persian words has decreased to a very great extent. Words that were once familiar may be obsolete today, and we have no right to use them any more unless we put them within brackets.

On the other hand, let me assure my readers that against the writers in Persianized Urdu, there is an overwhelming majority of those writers who have the simple and colloquial language "of the mint" as the basis of their literary style. The fidelity of the Urdu writers to their genuine vernacular is admitted by one of the most famous Hindi authors, Ram Nares Tripathi. He observes:

"It is my firm belief that nobody without knowing Urdu can write good Hindi. Till now the Urdu manner of composition is superior to that of Hindi in many respects. The beautiful way in which idioms are used in Urdu can be only brought into Hindi by those writers who are well versed in Urdu."<sup>1</sup>

And such lovers of the genuine vernacular constitute the undisputed majority. The tremendous output of the simple Urdu literature is of considerable literary value, and what may be marked out as of sterling quality is not always rare.

At this point we must turn our attention to another factor that was bound to hamper the growth of mutual understanding between Hindus and Moslems and consequently make the blending of dialects difficult and the development of a *lingua-franca* an impossibility. Buddhism had almost been vanquished when the Moslems attacked India. And Brahmanism, after the suppression of centuries, reasserted itself in extreme reaction to all that Buddhism had stood for. With the advent of Moslems the victory of Brahmanism was finally established. The rulers of the country being untouchables, the higher class, the most honoured and learned among the Hindus retreated to a safe distance, where Moslems had little chance of viewing them at close

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1. *Kavita Kaumadi*, Pt. I, p. 14.

quarters. Whatever information regarding the religion and philosophy of the Hindus they gained was entirely through their own spirit of inquiry, then fully awake ; and there is ample proof of the keen interest that Moslems had shown in Hindu religion, philosophy and art which is preserved in their literature. However, the blending could not be perfect because of the mutual ignorance that prevailed on both sides.

The newcomers were in favour of the vernaculars. Vaishnava, Baul and Sahajya literature flourished under their government. The golden period of Hindi literature began with Akbar and ended with Aurangzib. The initiative and patronage accorded by them to the vernaculars drew the attention of the Sanskrit scholars. They took charge of these and left them thoroughly Sanskritized. It was natural. The pandits, with their glorious inheritance of Sanskrit literature, could not avoid the Sanskritization of the vernaculars, which they had generally considered unholy and very reluctantly conceded to use them as their literary medium. And so the vernaculars were developed on the basis of Sanskrit. The Hindu tradition, to the greatness of which the Hindu mind had once again become conscious, could not but influence the vernaculars deeply.

Let us take the case of Bengal. What is true of Bengal, is true of the rest of India. The attitude of the Brahmins towards the Bengali vernacular is described by Sushil Kumar De in the following words :

"So far indeed had they carried their contempt for their mother-tongue that while they cultivated the learned language [ i.e. Sanskrit ] with assiduity, they, in many instances, prided themselves on writing the language of the people with inaccuracy and sometimes in almost unintelligible semi-barbaric sanskritized style."<sup>1</sup>

And the result was, to quote from Dinesh Chandra Sen :

"In the vernacular literature from the 14th century down . . . we find a supreme Brahmanic dignity maintained with a supreme regard for Sanskrit. During this age Sanskrit metaphors and similes were largely imported into Bengali. Indeed, the vernacular of Bengal was so highly Sanskritized by the Renaissance Brahmins, and its metamorphosis so completely hid its original Prakrit form, that some of our people have been erroneously led to trace its origin to Sanskrit and explain its construction by the rules of Panini and Mugdhabodha."<sup>2</sup>

1. *Bengali Literature*. p. 53.

2. *Eastern Bengal Ballads*, Vol. I, Pt. I, p. xxvi.

It does not seem improbable, therefore, that this exclusive love of Sanskrit on the part of the Hindus should also have led them to exclude such words from their higher literature which contact with the Moslems had made current, and thus made the gulf between the colloquial and the literary still wider. Shivaji was the first to order the elimination of Perso-Arabic vocabulary from the Marhatti language. There have been such persons in other provinces also since then. Swami Dayanand had a similar ideal of pure Hindi. He considered Hindi the "national" language of India and named it "Arya Bhasha". Mahatmaji in his convocation address at Fungalore emphasised the importance of the Sanskrit bias of the "Hindu languages" tending towards their unity :

"The reason why Hindi is so ridiculously easy is that all the languages, including even the four South Indian, spoken by Hindus in India contain a large number of Sanskrit words. It is a matter of history that contact in the old days between the South and the North used to be maintained by means of Sanskrit. Even today the Sastris in the South hold discourses with the Sastris in the North through Sanskrit. The difference in the various vernaculars is mainly of grammar. . . . The grammar of the South Indian languages is, of course, vastly different, and even their vocabularies before they came under the influence of Sanskrit, were equally different. But now even these languages have adopted a very large number of Sanskrit words. . . ."1

The present Hindi movement is a bid for bringing the Sanskrit culture back to Hindu life and letters and uniting the Hindus of India under its ideal. A few quotations from the leaders of the movement will prove my assertion. Kaka Kalelkar, as head of the Hindi Delegation to Trichinopoly ( March 26, 1937 ), observed in his speech delivered at the National College :

"Dharma was preserved by the ancient Acharyas in Sanskrit and almost all the Acharyas came from the South and they spread the Dharma to the people in the North through Sanskrit. It was now the turn of the Northerners, at a time when Dharma was at a low ebb, to come to the South and put in their strong plea in favour of Hindi, so that the country's Dharma could live. . . ."2

Lady Raman in her welcoming address, delivered at the All India Sahitya Sammelan ( Madras, March 27, 1937 ) said :

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1. The *Harijan*, 1936, p. 154.

2. The *Hindu*, March 27, 1937.

"For us, Hindi is a symbol of nationalism and is the best means of inter-provincial communication. There was a time when Hindu religion held supreme sway in the country and, in consequence, Sanskrit came to be the national language of the land. Nationalism is always reflected in the spoken languages. Sanskrit was the medium of instruction in the University of Taxila, in the days of Hindu predominance, while Pali took its place in the famous Nalanda University when Buddhism reigned supreme. This is the age of modern nationalism and the best vehicle of our national thought can be no other than Hindi, *the bearer of the heritage of ancient Sanskrit and Pali.*"<sup>1</sup>

Pandit Kasi Krishnacharya sent a telegraphic message to the above mentioned Conference, which ran :

"May Hindi lead up to the cultural renaissance in the Country, *being but Sanskrit in diluted form*—Wish success."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Swaminath Aiyar in his welcome address at the session of the Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad held at Madras ( March, 1937 ) said :

"In ancient times Sanskrit was our common language. Hindi alone can now take the place of Sanskrit, and through it we can know the original works written in the provincial languages. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, Pandit Sundarlal in his letter to Mahatma Gandhi sums up the position differently.

"If we consider Urdu and Hindi two different languages, then this is quite true that Hindi is not a spoken language of any place, while Urdu is. By Hindi I mean the Khari-boli Hindi ; Braj Bhasha or Awadhi, according to their grammars are very far from Hindi and Urdu. And Maulana Abdul Haq was quite right in telling you at Nagpur, that the amount of *Hindi* words and idioms used in Urdu is greater than it is in Hindi. It is quite true that modern Hindi is mostly a bookish and artificial language. To an extent, owing to the communal sense and the desire to go back to the old times, and also due to the idea of creating a 'national' language, and to some extent, ( at least as it was in the beginning), due to the selfish motive of the rulers and their help, this language is being popularised for the last thirty or forty years. In comparison to it Urdu is natural and a living language."<sup>4</sup>

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1. The *Hindu*, March 27, 1937. Italics are mine.

2. *Ibid.* Italics are mine.

3. The *Harijan*, 1937, p. 71.

4. The *Urdu*, Jan. 1937, pp. 193—194.



Final authority on this side of the question, which concerns the history and linguistic nature of Hindi can only be that of Sir G. A. Grierson's. In 1918 he repeated his considered opinion about Hindi in the following words on which is based the opinion expressed by Pandit Sundarlal.

"The present form of literary Hindi or High Hindi, is a reversion to the type of the non-Persianized vernacular of the Upper Doab, brought into use by the teachers at the college of Fort William in Calcutta in the early years of the nineteenth century. It was desired to create a Hindustani for the use of Hindus and this was recreated by taking Urdu, the only form then known, as the basis . . . Owing to the popularity of the *Prem Sagar* of Lallu Ji Lal, one of the first books written in this newly devised speech, and also owing to its supplying the need for a *lingua franca* which could be used by the strictest Hindus . . . etc."<sup>1</sup> In his *Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* he had observed about the same language that it "was one uniform artificial dialect, the mother-tongue of no native born Indian, forced into acceptance by the prestige of its inventors . . ."<sup>2</sup> Again, with regard to the cause of its invention he observes in *The Linguistic Survey of India*: "It enabled men of widely distant provinces to converse with each other without having recourse to the, to them, unclean words of the Musalmans."<sup>3</sup>

Such is the unhappy destiny of our land that pure channels of cultural communication are sooner or later poisoned with the foul vapours of religious fanaticism masquerading as nationalism. In his message to the above mentioned All India Sahitya Sammelan, Rabindranath laid special emphasis on this aspect of the problem, but, unfortunately his warning was ignored. "I hope," said the message, "that the language which is to claim our allegiance as the *lingua franca* will prove and maintain its complete freedom from any communal bias. It must truly represent the double current of Sanskrit and Persian literatures that have been working side by side for the last many centuries and must boldly enfranchise all the words that have been naturalised by long use. . . . I used to think that Hindi and Urdu were really one language, written in two different scripts,

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1. "Indo Aryan Vernaculars", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*. 1918, Vol. I, Pt. II, p. 52; *Ibid.* 1936, Vol. VIII, Pt. II, III, pp. 373, 374.

2. p 107.

3. Vol. I, Pt. I, p. 166.

with only a slight variation in emphasis on Sanskrit or Arabic words, according to the cultural association of the people who use them. But now I am told that these two are fast growing into two different languages, mutually distrustful of each other. I hope those who have undertaken the lead in replacing English by a national medium of communication will realise their responsibility in this respect. I wish them all success.”<sup>1</sup>

What is surprising is that none of the leaders is able to consider the great extent to which a language is conditioned by its script. One single language, if written in two different scripts, one section of people using one script, the other section the other script, is bound to develop into two gradually differing languages, neither of which will represent the common spoken language of the people. The two sections will be able to speak to each other but will not be able to read each other, and to the extent the thoughts and feelings of people are susceptible to the influence of their writers, the two sections will be exposed to ( what is likely and what actually happens ) contrary influences. It is, indeed, our conviction that not until the scripts of both Hindi and Urdu become a common one, be it Nagari, Arabic or Roman, will the writers of Hindi and Urdu realize their mistake in trying to make their Hindi or Urdu unintelligible to the masses. A common script will make the mutual borrowing of words much more easy than it is now. If Roman script is accepted by both, it will also remove the unnecessary stigma of religion from the foreheads of the Hindi and Urdu literatures. Then something identical to the process of osmosis will take place, and evolve the real *lingua franca* acceptable to both Hindus and Moslems.

In the meanwhile the high-brows in both the languages would continue their existence. It is certain that Persianization of the one and the Sanskritization of the other will finally result in fossilization of both.

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1. The *Hindu*, March 27, 1937.

## TWO POEMS

### SEEKING PEACE

I went for peace to a far off wood,—  
Strange, how Fate conspires !  
I found in peace a hissing brood  
Of forbidden desires.

Betrayed in shame I cursed my lot,  
My scheme of quietude,  
And home returned to till my plot  
With seeds of platitude.

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### SEEMING SUBLIME

So much in us that seems sublime  
Is only so to outward view :  
The lake conceals its depth of slime  
And emulates the heavens' blue.

K. K.

## IN A WEST-BENGAL VILLAGE\*

K. P. Mukherji, M.A., Ph.D.

It is a very happy sign of the time we live in that we have at last discovered that the real India is in her villages. There is a particular association of India's culture with her villages, because our culture has been essentially rural in its origin. It had blossomed forth in all its glory in her villages, though today they are in ruins. And to know the fountain spring of our culture we have to go back to the villages. But it is not alone the past that makes it necessary for us to study our villages. Our present and our future are entwined with them. No doubt we are students of Society in all its aspects, but because the vast majority of our people are of necessity village dwellers, that type of social organisation we call the village, should naturally engage our special attention in India.

Such was the motif in the background of our mind when we went out on a social survey of a neighbouring village, Paruldanga. It is important to emphasise this background, because devoid of its proper perspective our investigation of the conditions of an isolated village might appear meaningless and futile.

To start with, I supplied each one of my fellow-workers with a list of the following heads of enquiry :

1. Nearest Railway Station, Hospital, Post Office, Police Station.
2. Literacy among men and women.
3. Provision of medical relief.
4. Caste rules ; how far observed. Possibilities of inter-caste and widow marriage.
5. Sanitation : water supply, drainage, burning ghat, etc.
6. Irrigation.
7. Child marriage.
8. Population. Proportion of high to low caste.
9. Deaths in maternity cases.
10. Possibilities of introducing contraceptive methods.
11. Amusements, for adults and children.

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\* Every year some students of Visva-Bharati accompanied by their teacher of Economics, camp in a neighbouring village for a few days and try to gain practical acquaintance with the economic and social life of the villagers. This article is a review of one of such camps by the teacher in charge of the camp.—Ed.

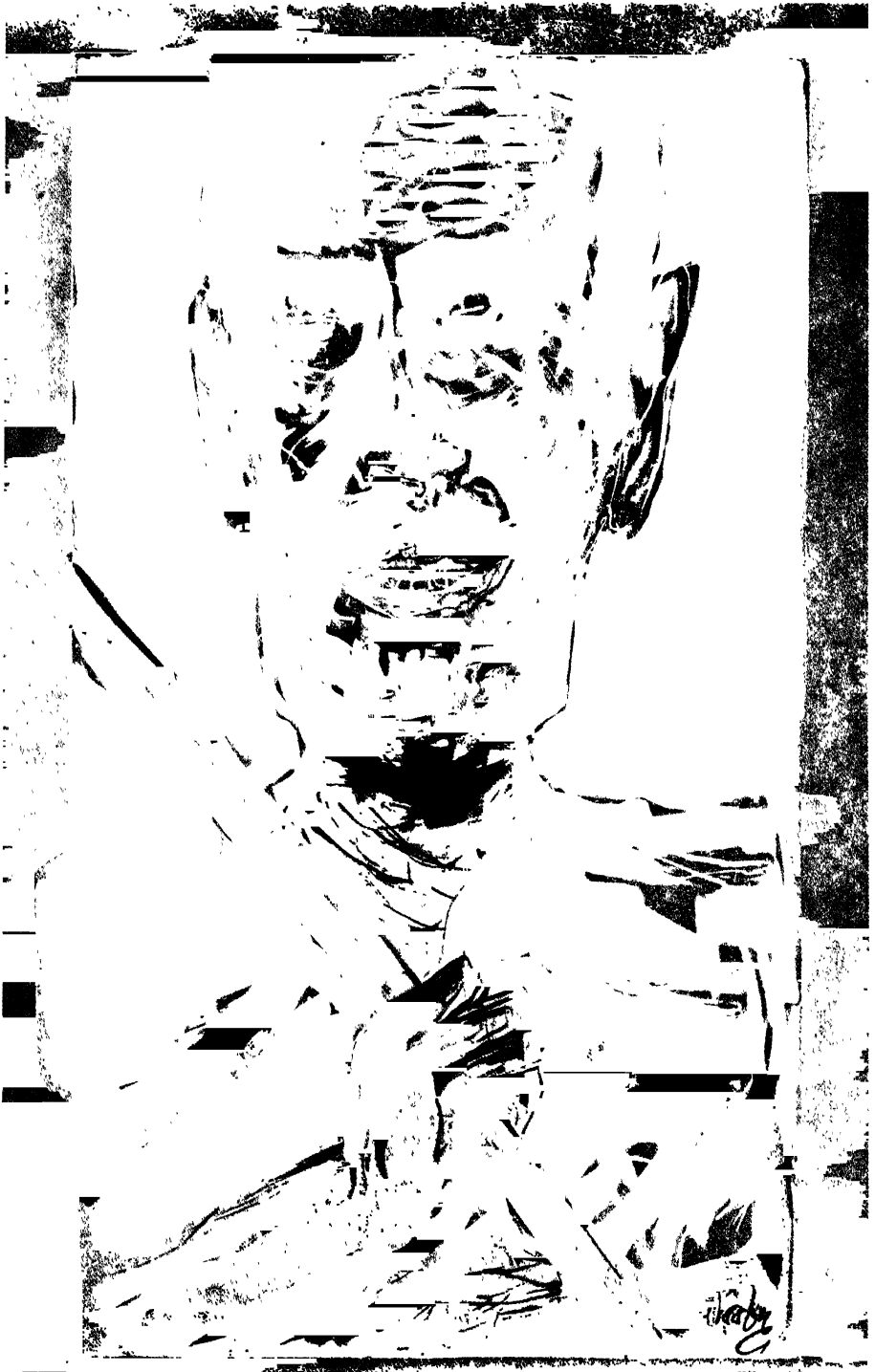
12. Adult education.
13. Food & general health.
14. Litigation and Panchayat.
15. Land revenue.
16. Possibilities of supplementary income.
17. Co-operative system of work.
18. Extent of land owned by an individual.

It would have been over-ambitious on our part to hope to investigate all these points critically and well. As a matter of fact, we knew at the very start that we would find it difficult even to open an enquiry regarding some of the heads of enquiry mentioned above. We were aware that in spite of our best endeavours not to offend the susceptibilities of our village friends we would perhaps unconsciously offend them by inviting them to discuss with us questions of more or less unorthodox nature. Our suggestions, for example, regarding prevention of births and introduction of sports for adults proved to be rather vexatious and repugnant to many old men of the village. The majority of the thoughtful persons admitted, however, that they were not in a position to discuss these points with us because they had never before given any thought to these vitally important topics and assured us that they would do so in future.

This apparently poor response did not discourage us. On the contrary, I was personally very much encouraged to find the thoughtful majority so willing to hear us and so ready to discuss these topics at their leisure. That we were allowed to carry our message and to communicate our suggestions to them, was success beyond my expectations.

Before I give any details regarding the village under review, I think I ought to say something about the method we followed during the course of our investigation. We did not enter the village and begin to count the heads of men, women, children, cows and pigs from one corner to the other. That would have been mechanical figure-collection, lacking even the merit of statistical data, for the figures obtained from villagers are so often misleading. Moreover, I am not a worshipper of mere figures, especially where human behaviour is concerned.

We, therefore, always kept in mind the fact that though we might try to collect all available data we need not make a fetish of it. Our chief object was to fraternise with the villagers, to know them intimately, and, as far as possible, to let them know us and the spirit



*By Rabindranath Tagore*



with which we wanted to approach them ; and through this mutual intercourse make an endeavour to know exactly where they stood economically and morally. I flatter myself with the idea that we were to a very great extent successful in this.

Apart from house to house visits for making ourselves acquainted with their household conditions and for collecting statistics, we also invited the villagers to assemble every evening at a central place. To our great satisfaction all classes of people attended these evening meetings where we put them leading questions, and the replies and discussions which followed were embodied in notes taken down by us, some of which we reproduce below.

Paruldanga is a small village ( from six to eight square furlongs in area ), situated at a distance of three miles from Santiniketan towards the east. The nearest railway station, Bolpur, is two miles away. The nearest post office is Santiniketan, from where the peon goes every alternate day. The burning ghat is situated on the river Kopai at a distance of two miles.

With the exception of the village money-lender's house ( which is a brick building ) all the houses are made of mud walls and thatched roofs. The drainage system is most unsatisfactory ; unlike the Santals, the Bengali villagers have no sense of sanitation. Houses have been built very close to each other, so that it is difficult for any body to approach many houses without passing through narrow and winding lanes. The rooms are seldom well-ventilated. Over and above this, the addition of a little pond by the side of the kitchen ( for the convenience of the ladies ) makes the atmosphere of a dwelling place unhealthy and obnoxious.

There is no hospital or pharmacy in the village. There is one physician, an ex-compounder, who dabbles both in homeopathic and allopathic medicines.

The village contains within its boundaries some 58 houses or families : 1 Brahmin, 15 Bagdis, 9 Muchis, 2 Bashtams and the rest Sadgopes. There is one small Shiva temple and the Brahmin acts as the priest. The total population of the village is 261, of which 64 are male adults, 89 female adults, 62 male children ( that is below 16 ) and 46 female children. Out of a total of 153 adults ( male and female ) 147 are illiterate ( that is over 96 per cent. ). Bagdi and Muchi adults are all illiterate without exception. Only one male adult Sadgope is literate. In the entire village only 5 adult women are literate ( and they are all Sadgopes ).



The children are generally sickly. Elderly villagers are unanimous in their opinion that the population of the village is gradually decreasing and that it is not due to emigration. Malaria is the most prevalent disease which is undermining the health of the people. There is no trained midwife in, or in the vicinity of, the village and the rate of infant mortality is quite high. In recent times ( we could not find out during which period exactly ) 139 infants were born in the village: 74 males and 65 females ; out of which 54 (that is about 40 per cent. ) died. 11 died immediately after birth, 12 within 15 days, 6 within 3 months and the rest at the age of 7 or 8.

Out of a total of 40 children of school-going age ( from 6 to 16 years ) some 30 attend the local school, where boys and girls read together. There is no untouchability problem and Bagdi and Muchi children are admitted in the school on the same terms as Sadgope children. The teacher's pay ( apart from what he gets in kind ) is Rs. 5/- per month, of which Rs. 2/- is paid by Visva-Bharati and Rs. 3/- by the District Board.

The village is inhabited by people of five castes ( all Hindus ). Of the total population 6 are Brahmins, 145 Sadgopes, 54 Bagdis, 47 Muchis and 9 Bashtams. The caste-rules are not very seriously observed by children and young men, but the ladies and old men observe them strictly. Inter-caste marriage is unthinkable.

Excepting among the low castes ( that is Muchis and Bagdis ) the bride's father is obliged to pay a dowry, which varies according to the qualifications of the bridegroom. It was difficult for us to get an exact idea of the amount generally paid by way of dowry. We were, however, told on enquiry that if a bridegroom happened to be a matriculate and in addition possessed 10 or 12 bighas of land, he was sure to get six or seven hundred rupees. But, fortunately, matriculates are very few and presumably, on an average, a marriage must be costing the bride's father two to three hundred rupees only. Sometimes the bride's father is obliged to sell his land and other properties to meet the demands of the bridegroom's party. When a father is absolutely unable to offer a dowry he takes recourse to the abject practice of getting his daughter married to a very old man ( say, of 60 or 65 ) because he would not charge a dowry.

At present there are three or four such old men in the village who have succeeded in winning the hands of very young girls in marriage. These cases emphasise on our minds the central fact regarding the complexion of our Indian society, viz., the compulsory

character of marriage as the vocation for women. The compulsion, undoubtedly, is not a legal one but the humiliation and disgrace which a father is made to suffer at the hands of his kindly neighbours, in case his daughter remains unmarried after a certain age, makes it incumbent on the father to settle his daughter's fate with somebody—even if this somebody be a mere caricature of a human being, with all the pathological symptoms. The element of compulsion is only veiled and that is what makes it the more injurious and incapable of being brought under proper diagnosis and treatment.

According to most witnesses, child marriage, which was so prevalent among the Sadgopes till recently, has become very rare. Here too it is difficult to accept the version of the villagers because probably a girl of 13 or 14 would not be considered a "child" by them. That such girls are getting married quite often was very obvious because, in spite of the strong propensity of village women to avoid our critical eyes, we were able to observe a few girls with red vermilion marks on their heads who could never have been more than fourteen. Obviously the Sarda Act has not been very effective in Paruldanga. Among the Muchis and Bagdis child marriage is the rule. Girls are married generally at the age of nine or ten. But there is no dowry to be paid on either side.

Widow re-marriage which is unthinkable among the Sadgopes is not only permissible but frequently takes place among the Muchis and Bagdis, though a widow can marry only a widower and a widower a widow. There is no polygamy (which is not permissible) among these lower castes. It is permissible, however, among the Sadgopes, though for the sake of convenience most of them prefer to have only one wife. Polyandry is unknown.

The economic condition of the villagers is absolutely wretched. The causes of this wretchedness are many, the most important being : lack of sufficient land or absolute landlessness for the very poor, ill-health, lack of education, want of healthy amusements, lack of organised effort and foresight. Some of these causes may well be enumerated as the effects of their poverty, and no doubt they are interdependent. But, whether they are considered as causes or as results, the tragic fact of their existence cannot be gainsaid. We tried to induce them to consider their appalling poverty as a hateful disease, to devise means to conquer this foe and not to get resigned to their fate. Such counsels to be fruitful must be often repeated and therefore our visits to our village friends should be more frequent.

While taking a stock of the economic assets of the villagers we found that most low caste villagers ( that is, Muchis and Bagdis ) were landless labourers ( either working on others' fields or as domestic servants ). Most Sadgopes own land. The total area of arable land owned by 261 villagers is 808 bighas, so that on an average there is roughly 3 bighas of land to the share of each individual, but out of this total of 808 bighas, 200 bighas are owned by the Mahajan, so that the average would settle down at or around 2 bighas.

It is obvious that even if they get a pretty good harvest in a particular year, each individual cannot get sufficient rice for himself from his share of the land ( which is cultivated only once a year ). Moreover, rice cannot give all the nourishment which one requires. Underfeeding, therefore, is the order of the day. In a bad year, when the rice crop ( which is practically the all-important crop for the villagers ) fails, most villagers suffer from starvation. Even when they do not actually starve, the food they take is far from satisfactory, consisting as it generally does of *rice* and *karai dal*.

It is rather difficult to grow vegetables in these parts due to the barrenness of the soil, but even the little that can be grown is not grown owing to the absence of any desire for better living. An abject sense of resignation to their lot has completely overtaken the minds of these villagers and that has killed the germ of initiative—the best gift of Nature to man.

No wonder that over 95 per cent. of the people are indebted either to the village Mahajan or to the Kabuliwallas or to P'unjabi money-lenders, and pay an enormous rate of interest. The interest charged by the village Mahajan is from 2 to 4 pice per rupee per month. The Kabulis charge 2 annas per rupee per month ( that is, 150 per cent. ). When they borrow paddy from the Mahajan they pay interest at the rate of seven seers per *Sholi* ( 1 Sholi = 20 seers ) per season. This year the rice harvest has been satisfactory but the villagers are not so happy about it, because two years ago when the harvest failed they had borrowed paddy from the Mahajan and the interest has accumulated to such a huge extent that now even if they are prepared to part with their entire produce to satisfy their debts they would be able to repay only a portion.

We suggested the establishment of a *Dharmagola* where all the villagers would stock a part of their produce in years of plenty so that they may help themselves in lean years without going to the Mahajan and paying him heavy interest. They agreed to give their

best consideration to this proposal but many wise persons were pessimistic about it because of the narrow and separatist outlook of most villagers, which makes it difficult for them to do anything in a united and organised way. The over-critical and quarrelsome habit of our people is a source of permanent obstruction towards the realization of a healthy corporate life in the villages, as it is in the towns.

One very important thing which struck us was that these villagers must supplement their income in some way if they would avoid a chronic state of poverty verging on starvation. The possibilities in this direction are naturally limited but, owing to lack of imagination and initiative, even those few sources which are capable of yielding some extra-income are left unutilised.

As the most suitable device of supplementing their income ( in addition to rice growing which is at present the only worth-mentioning occupation of the village ), we suggested the cultivation of some other crops and agricultural products. Already we found that some grams, barley, sugarcane and potatoes were being grown in a haphazard fashion in some fields. The quantity grown is so small that it cannot be exported at profit, nor is it sufficient for the consumption of the whole village. It seems that, due to the barrenness of the soil and total lack of irrigation facilities, it is not possible to grow either potatoes or sugarcane on a large scale.

Being of opinion that they can easily supplement their income by producing molasses and sugar from the date-palm ( which can be grown on barren tracts comparatively easily and which has the additional advantage of yielding sap year after year without any extra cost of cultivation ), we suggested, specially to the well-to-do Sadgopes, to have date-palm plantations. But blind and ignorant tradition which so effectively dominates the rural mind would not allow them to do many things, which would really alleviate their suffering and misery. We were not a little surprised to hear that it would be considered a sin for a Sadgope to cut *Khejur* trees for tapping the sap because that would be as objectionable an offence as castrating an animal.

Superstition, however, is not the only enemy of these poor villagers. A false sense of dignity is also responsible for not allowing them to take up such works as poultry and cattle-breeding in their hands. Not only is it unthinkable for a Sadgope to have a poultry business but even Bagdis who are allowed ( by village convention ) to eat eggs are not to engage in such disreputable occupations.

Indeed, so jealously is this respectability guarded that Kulin Sadgopes would not take up the plough and cultivate their lands with their own hands, even when they are very poor. A year ago, owing to the famine, they were obliged to cultivate their fields themselves, but now that the effects of the famine have abated, the Kulins have again given up cultivation and are maintaining their age-long dignity and respectability by whiling away their time in gossip in company with their inseparable hookas.

We also suggested to them handicrafts ( such as basket- and furniture-making and weaving ) as sources of additional income. Idleness and lack of initiative are the main reason of their inability in these directions, though, no doubt to please us, they said that these would no doubt be very good sources of additional income but where was the facility of learning these crafts ! On our saying that, supposing facilities for teaching weaving, spinning, dyeing, basket-making, etc., were made by us through Sriniketan, would they avail of such opportunities, they answered in the affirmative.

The problem of water supply (specially for drinking purposes ) requires to be tackled immediately. There is not a single well in the village. There is not a single decent tank. The one tank which is supposed to have the best water is not left alone for drinking purposes. Washing, cleaning, bathing ( both for men and animals )—everything is done in this tank. The water in the middle is not bad, but there is no flow as it is surrounded on all sides by reeds and other aquatic plants. Apart from this there are no less than nine ponds which must be breeding mosquitoes by millions. Three of the smaller ponds, with rotten bamboo leaves and thick green water, are real danger spots.

Appalling as were the economic and physical conditions, what struck us most, and what appeared to us to be most harmful for them, was their narrow, unimaginative and senile mental outlook. So far as the mental plane was concerned we felt as if we were sojourning the *land of the dead*. Sad caricatures of human beings, their very humility was insulting to their manhood, their effortlessness most oppressive and distressing to any youthful and alert mind.

To a very great extent this is due to the lack of healthy sports and amusements among the people. Our first suggestion of introducing some sort of amusement and sport among the people ( including the adult females ), of course, evoked the laughter of these wise men, as it was considered a childish waste of time. On further enquiry, it

was found that they had plenty of time to indulge in such pastimes as playing cards, *pasha*, *couri* ( by women ), and smoking tobacco, *Ganja*, *churas*, etc. Drinking is also very common among the lower castes and the Sadgopes also indulge in it on festivals.

As means of improving the moral and mental tone of the village life we suggested the introduction of non-religious amusements ( that is amusements other than purely religious festivals which consist either in excess of feasting or fasting ), spread of literacy among adults and the introduction of contraceptive methods with a view to regulate population according to the financial means of the parents.

As was to be expected, our suggestions ( especially those regarding checking population by artificial means ) were not to the taste of some elderly persons and one old man made sarcastic remarks at us, questioning our wisdom in these matters. But the redeeming features were not lacking. Almost all the young fathers of the present generation gave us a patient hearing and confessed that they had never thought about these problems which concern them so intimately and assured us that they would think over the matter and have discussions with their people in right earnest.

## TO A PLAQUE OF A BUDDHA

How calm thy brow, thy gentle eyes are closed  
    Against life's passions, all its burning fire ;  
Thy hands lie still, triumphantly reposed,  
    Remote, annihilated of desire.  
What matchless poise of mind thy form enshrines,  
    Thy dreams removed from time's vast vanities !  
Nirvana hovers round thy head, bright shines  
    Thy halo gleaming through the Bodhi trees.

O Scornful lips, curved in a quiet smile  
    Disdaining all life's littleness and pain ;  
Our petty joys could not thy heart beguile,  
    Our cheap ambitions proved to thee too vain.  
Thine eyes are closed, all quenched their passionate fire,  
    Remote, annihilated of desire.

E. H. d'Alvis.

## SUBSTANCE AND FORM

( Chapter from *A Diary of the Five Elements* )\*

Rabindranath Tagore

SROTASWINI, one morning, came up to me with our *Diary* book which she had purloined from my shelf, complaining : "What's all this you've been writing—putting into my mouth words I never spoke ?"

"What harm ?" I asked.

"If," she replied, "you had only made me talk as I might or could, even if I didn't, I'd not have felt so ashamed. But what you've done is like writing a book of your own, and passing it off in my name."

"How are you to know," I rejoined, "how much you tell us ? What you say and what you are, mingle together to express something very big. Your words are fulfilled by your life. How can you expect me to leave out the part that's remained understood ?"

This reduced Srotaswini to silence. I felt she had taken my meaning, but to make sure I returned to the charge. "You," I continued, "are with us in real life, revealing yourself with ever-fresh expression. You need no effort to bring it home to us that you are as good as you are true. But to make this clear in writing about you, I can't do without many words, all kinds of devices. You complain I've made you say more than you really did,—on the contrary, I've summarised you, with only a small selection from your sayings, your doings, the suggestions of your countless variety of tone and gesture. But unless I had kept all these in view, I couldn't have broadcast to other listeners what I received from you—they'd not only have heard less, but heard wrongly."

Srotaswini turned her profile towards me as she opened a book and absently fingered its pages, murmuring : "It's only your love that makes you think all this of me."

"Alas !" I was moved to exclaim. "Little have I the wealth of love to see you for all you are. One must love as vastly as God does, in order to know the bigness that lies in a single human being."

"Now, now," admonished Khiti, who had been waxing desperate. "What on earth are you driving at ? Miss Srotaswini puts you a

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\* See footnote under article "Laughter" in Vol. II, Part II of this Journal—Ed.



simple kind of question, and you grow sententious over quite a different kind of answer !”

“ I know it,” said I. “ But isn’t this bound to happen when talking intimately ? The mind is inflammable stuff of peculiar quality. It doesn’t always take fire where the spark hits it, but sometimes flames up at a spot yards away. Outsiders may have no place in a select committee, but in a festive gathering every newcomer is made welcome. Ours is a merry meeting where the mirth is spoilt if even any uninvited idea isn’t smilingly made to feel at home.”

“ Sorry I spoke !” jeered Khiti. “ You know the story of young Prahlad who got stuck at the letter *K*,\* because it reminded him of Krishna and moved him to tears, so that he never learnt his alphabet. It’s always best to let the Prahlad-type of person go his own way—so pray don’t mind me, but disburden yourself of the thought that’s invaded your mind.”

“ I wanted to say,” I went on, “ that only in one we love do we get a glimpse of the Infinite. To put it the other way, when we see Infinity in sentient creatures we give it the name of love, and when we see it in nature we call it the enjoyment of beauty. Coming to think of it, this is the truth in the depths of the Vaishnava cult.”

“ O Lord !” groaned Khiti. “ Now we’re in for it.”

Nor did Srotaswini or Deepti appear to be any more keen than he about a philosophical discussion. But when from the dark recesses of the mind some thought suddenly springs into the light, what hunter of ideas can resist the temptation to pursue it to a finish ? The mischief is, while I but chatter away to capture some elusive thought of my own, people imagine I’m out to expound philosophy to them. Anyhow, I carried on : “ The Vaishnava religion seeks to experience God through all the loving relationships of the worldly life. Seeing the boundless joy which the mother finds in her child as she wraps her little one with layer upon layer of the fabric of her heart, from moment to moment, over and over again, without end,—the Vaishnava worships his God as child. Seeing the devotion unto death of servant for master, the illimitable self-sacrifice of friend for friend, the timeless mutual surrender of lover and beloved,—the Vaishnava recognises the Divine Infinitude of all these supreme manifestations of love.”

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\* *K* is the first consonant of the Sanskrit (and Bengali) alphabet, *Tṛ*.

Khiti remarked : "The more I hear about the infinitude of love, the boundlessness of its bonds, the less I follow it. In the beginning I used to think I could perceive some glimmer of meaning, but now I find that a heap of words like Infinity, Eternity, and the like, is blocking the way of my understanding."

"Language," I agreed, "is like the ground. If you keep on raising the same kind of crop, its fertility gets exhausted. It's true that words like Infinity and Eternity have been over-worked and so are fairly worn out. They should never be used except for their real significance. We ought to show proper consideration for our mother tongue."

"A consideration I miss in you," laughed Khiti.

Samir, meanwhile, had been looking over the *Diary* in his turn. "I too have a complaint," he now broke in. "Are these 'elements' in your *Diary* supposed to be flesh-and-blood creatures, or only disembodied spirits? They talk well enough, but where's their human likeness?"

"So you miss that, do you?" I asked, somewhat downcast.

"You seem," Samir went on relentlessly, "to prefer to the fresh mango its dried pulp, free from skin, stone and water. But what about the alluring form, the appetising fragrance? You offer only my substance, not the man in me. But will your reader be able to get his teeth into the toughness that remains of me, minus my minor qualities? As for myself, the applause of the select few isn't at all satisfying,—I should have liked to live on in the lives of the multitude."

"And how would you have me achieve this for you?" I enquired.

"That's more than I can say," avowed Samir. "I was only laying my complaint before you. I have substance, I also have flavour. Substance may serve man's purposes, flavour is what he enjoys. And, as I was saying, it gives me no pleasure to be of use in forming an opinion, or pointing an argument. I wish to be recognised by men as one of them, to be accepted as their own. I've no hankering to get rid of this jolly human life with all its mistakes and follies, for the sake of re-incarnation as a perfect magazine article. I'm not a printed book, nor a philosophical doctrine, neither a good nor even a bad syllogism, but only that which my friends and intimates know me to be."

Vyom had so long been in placid repose, reclining in his favourite

easy chair with his legs raised aloft on the back of another. He now suddenly joined in: "Whether it be doctrine or argument, in their case the conclusion is the goal, in the end is their glory. But man is a different proposition. His chief characteristic is his unending movement, his immortality. Who can summarise movement, condense immortality? If you put flawless speeches into the mouth of a man you give the impression that his mind has ceased to grow, that he is at the end of his tether. Effort, error and incompleteness, at first sight, look like signs of poverty, but they really show richness of character, they indicate its living quality, the range of its possibilities. If you leave out its colour of immaturity, its softness, its weakness, you cut short a man's character into the smallness of untimely end; you finish the volume of his immortal life at its *Table of Contents*."

"Man's power of expression," observed Samir, "is extremely limited. That's why what he manages to express requires to be amplified by intimations and suggestions, the words to be supplemented by tone and gesture, the idea by imagination. It's not enough to have a vehicle, you must get it going. It's not enough to make a man stand up and deliver ready made speeches, you must make him move, you must show his imperfections so as to bring out his greatness."

"And so," said Srotaswini, "there's this discussion always cropping up—which is the more important in literature, substance or form? I've often thought over it, but never been able to get it clear. I suspect that the one or the other takes precedence according to the mood of the moment."

Vyom, with his head thrown back, and his eyes fixed on the ceiling, offered his opinion: "Substance is the body, form its life. The body is complete in the present, life is a restless companion who urges it along towards its future, who brings into what is immediately visible the hope of ever-new possibilities. The substance that is expressed in literature is but the inert body; the suggestiveness which is added to it is its life, giving it movement and growth."

Samir put it differently: "The substance of literature is ever so old, it gains its novelty every time by means of its form."

"The same thing applies to man," added Srotaswini. "Each person comes in with the expression of his individuality through which we discover how age-old humanity is ever reaching out in new directions."

"This individuality of mind and character," pursued Deepti, "is each one's particular style. Through it we are introduced to one another, by it we test each other and carry on our mutual relations. I sometimes wonder what my own style is like !—not perspicuous, I doubt, but——"

"But trenchant, certainly !" chimed in Samir. "I also was speaking of this style which gives us our individual features. The plea I wanted to put forward was, that not only our thoughts but also our peculiarities should be put on record."

Deepti smiled meaningly. "Features," she explained, "are not always of equal significance, so we must make such plea with caution. Some features express, others conceal. The light within the diamond gleams out of itself, you don't have to break open the stone to get at it ; but a blade of grass has to burn up before it can show its flame. It's not for ordinary people like us to complain of our features not being brought out in a literary record. There are persons whose peculiarities, whose whole character, whose very presence is a source of joy and edification, and it's sufficient for any writer to preserve these as they are. As for the others, they have to be peeled or cut up before you get to their tasty part. In their case we should be grateful for whatever we get ; for, after all, how few have any pulp worth extracting, and how few have the skill to do it for us !"

"Excuse me, Miss Deepti," smiled back Samir. "But I'm not so modest as all that. I don't imagine myself a blade of grass ! Rather am I inclined to look on myself as a mine in which diamonds are hidden, awaiting an expert appraiser. As my years go by, I feel more and more that the world lacks, not precious stones, but competent jewellers. In my younger days it seemed to me that men and women worth the name had all taken refuge in epic and story and drama, and none were left in real life. Now I find that there's no dearth of real men around us,—but oh for the mind, the heart, to recognise them ! Had we but the gift of penetrating the world of real men, we should find to be eloquent there, those who are dumb on public platforms ; there invested with glory, those who are elbowed aside in Society ; there we should discover how the world is established on the selfless service and self-abnegation of the multitude whom it looks down upon as of no account. When shall we be favoured with a new incarnation of Vyasa who can reveal for us the numberless modern kinsmen of his epic heroes, Bhishma and Drona, Bheema and Arjuna, who are as gloriously fighting their battles in the *kurukshetra* of every-day life ?"

"What if your new Vyasa doesn't appear?" I cried. "Don't men already recognise one another's true worth?—if not, how does all this love come into their hearts? I knew a young fellow, working as a temporary bookkeeper on a bare pittance, far away from his home and people. I happened to be his employer, but so petty was he, I was hardly aware of his existence. One night he was suddenly attacked with cholera. From my room could be heard his pitiful moaning—Auntie, Auntie dear! All in a moment his submerged real life rose up before me in its truth. This stupid, ignorant, inconspicuous youth, who spent his days in my remote, country house, pen in hand, head bent sideways, copying figures into a book, there was for him this childless, widowed woman, who had lavished her pent-up mother's love to rear him into manhood. When on leaving the office room after his long day's work, he would go down to his lonely, dismal quarters below, and kindle the fire to cook his meal, did not his heart, while he was waiting for the pot to boil, return to dwell on the loving figure of his Auntie-mother in her distant cottage home? And for her part, how anxiously must her tender, desolate heart have awaited his meagre letters! The whole tragedy of his life came vividly before me on the eve of the flickering out of its little flame. I felt it would be something great if I could but save it. I nursed him through the night, but failed to return him to his Auntie, for he died the next morning. The value of this obscure life had not remained undiscovered merely because no poet had measured it, no reader had relished it. True, his wages had been only eight rupees a month and even that not for the full year,—but had not at least one loving life been absolutely devoted to him? Greatness is self-luminous, but we ordinary people are lit up by those who love us. The darkness which seemed empty is found to be full of worthy souls when the light of love is thrown on it."

Srotaswini was visibly moved. "I don't know why," she said, "but this poor young book-keeper of yours reminds me of our *punkha*-puller, Nihar. His wife died the other day, leaving two little children behind. Nihar goes on with his *punkha*-pulling, and does his other work as before, but how pinched and drawn his face has become, how dried up his whole body seems to be. My heart is wrung whenever I look on him, but not for his sake alone. I can't explain it properly, but through his suffering I seem to feel the sufferings of all mankind."

"That's easy to understand," I suggested, "for all human creatures have to feel or fear the pangs of separation from loved ones."

In the lines of sorrow on the face of your *punkha*-puller, the sorrow of the world is pictured."

"It's not only that," continued Srotaswini. "What wounds me so is, that there's more grief in the world than enough pity to go round. Countless sufferings are about us which man's consolation never reaches, while other places are flooded with superfluous sympathy. When I see this meek, uncomplaining Nihar of ours pulling away at his *punkha*, his children rolling about in the yard, uncared for, crying piteously when hurt, he himself only turning his head anxiously, trying to console them with his voice, unable to leave his post ; when I see how scanty is the joy in such lives, how grievous the pangs of hunger which keep them drudging till the end, with no quarter given to them for any shortcomings ; and when I am reminded how many such there are of whom we know nothing at all, I feel overwhelmed with the immense darkness that broods over the world, keeping the larger part of it out of our sight. None the less, those who people this darkness, they love and are worthy of being loved. And talking of the substance of literature, I do wish our poets would consider it their foremost work to throw the light of poetry on such lives, to make us vividly conscious of our kinship with them, to declare for us the common humanity of these inglorious ones shrouded in impenetrable darkness, who are utterly incompetent to express themselves, who cannot even properly know themselves, who are so dumbly, so numbly, suffering the joys and sorrows that fall to their lot."

"In the old days," said Khiti consolingly, "men were mainly attracted by power. Their social groups being then weak and defenceless, special men of talent and force necessarily filled the whole of their mind. With the progress of civilisation, Society has become strongly organised and has less need of individual prowess. Now the man of power has largely lost his prestige, and the weak, the ordinary men are coming to occupy a larger and larger space in the attention and affairs of the world. So the poems and stories of to-day have already given up their preoccupation with exalted persons, and taken to raking up the living embers from the ashes under which they lay smothered."

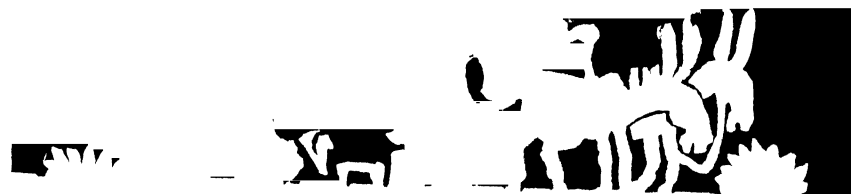
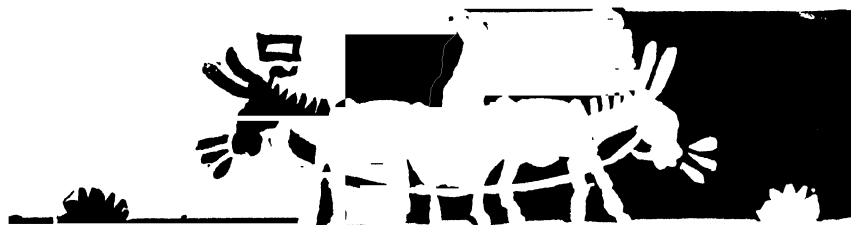
"The first rays of the sun of literature," I concluded, "naturally fell on the topmost peaks ; now that it has risen higher, its light has reached the valley, and is showing up the cottages of the lowly dwellers beneath."

### NOTE ON A LINO-CUT

THE lino-cut on the page opposite is by the artist Nandalal Bose, and is adapted from the University of Illinois Bulletin ( Vol. XXXIV, No. 43). It expresses the hope that the pious leaders of Hindu-Muslim Friction will one day realize what the natural animals take very little time to discover. Some of our wise leaders will probably regard this as a piece of fantastic optimism, but then artists are notorious for their lack of realism. In the meanwhile, however, the fact remains that

The assest of all asses  
Are the Hindu-Muslim masses,  
Who grudge their commonhood,  
And drudge for others' good,  
And are patient under lashes.

K. K.







## REVIEWS

THE ART OF LIFE : By Count Hermann Keyserling.  
Selwyn and Blount, London, 1937.

JUDGING from its current literature, Europe appears to be growing more and more conscious of the folly and futility of the way of life in which it has become entangled,—a way which has come to be accepted as civilised by mere force of its political ascendancy. But, in spite of the fact that the severest indictment of its own life is to be found in the pages of Western literature, when it comes to formulating or visualising some saner, more human mode of living, the representative thinkers of Europe get into a maze of confused thinking, from which, perhaps, the ideas fixed by the very predominance of their worldly position, stand in the way of their extricating themselves.

Religion has been practically given up as a possible clue to deliverance, for dogmatic Christianity incapacitates its votaries from venturing towards the higher levels of being (shunned as *mystic* ) from which a vision of the way out may be obtained. And of late we see in its place a furtive reliance on art with a capital A, not however without a remnant of the same kind of hesitation to explore its inner meaning, leading to a consequent vagueness as to how Art is to achieve what is thus expected of it.

In view of the practical bearing of the trend of Western thought on the fortunes of the dominated East, we turned with high hopes of at length getting a clearer idea of it, to Count Keyserling's latest work, *The Art of Life*, on the wrapper of which we found it stated that "perhaps no other book of his contains in such compact and readable form the pith of Keyserling's message to the modern world." Keyserling is doubtless to be taken as qualified, by reason of his German tradition of deep thinking, the breadth of vision expected from his philosophical travels, his practical experience in his School of Wisdom at Darmstadt, to make a contribution of special value to Viswabharati, that is to say, to human culture as a whole. But we regret to have to confess, at the very outset, that this book has not fulfilled our hopes in this regard.

In giving expression to our disappointment, we trust we do not risk any injustice to our brilliant Author by selecting as typical, out

of the several essays composing this volume, the chapter entitled "Life is an Art." And we shall of course take the precaution, in presenting extracts therefrom, of keeping to his own words.

The mischief, as Keyserling sees it, is thus stated in this chapter :

"Looking into the depths of the soul—what do we find ? Hardly ever do we find therein even that elemental satisfaction which is afforded by the appeasement of the hunger and thirst of Life. One finds disappointment and rancour and resignation and bitterness, conscious lies, travesties and comedies projected or unfolded in nearly every case for the deception of somebody or other ; at best, one finds the avowal to oneself that life is a tragedy.

And if life that is past, seen in large outline as history sees it, seems to be less of a bad business and presents a less ugly picture, it is because—helped on the one hand by an egoism which runs away from every disagreeable impression, and on the other by a real elimination of all those who are defeated in life, an elimination which nearly always takes place quickly—the majority do not notice these defeats.

In these circumstances it is only natural that—in order to make life bearable—man should use and even abuse that faculty of his which is the power of imagining himself different from what he is. This art, which is highly creative at its own plane, enables one to introduce into life substantial substitutes for happiness. Consequently, the opinions of others, the acceptance of transfiguring conventions, and of falsifying myths—the cleverest of which is doubtless that which defines true happiness as a function of the loss of all illusions—could in fact create an appearance of felicity concealing reality from the consciousness.

And yet there is no man who is in the least sincere and profound who does not feel that there *ought to be* a better solution for life than dissimulation and resignation. Hence the Hindu's belief that the plenary realisation of Being coincides with supreme beatitude."

It would appear from what the Author says later on, that in the last quoted paragraph he refers to the Hindu's belief with approval. But what are we to make of the confusion of ideas that concludes the preceding paragraph ? It reads as if the Author is complaining of the idea that "loss of illusion makes for happiness" because, according to him, such idea "creates an appearance of felicity concealing reality." This surely cannot be his real intention. True, a poet has pointed out the folly of wisdom where ignorance is bliss, but so far as we know,

the finest of poetic frenzy has not yet ventured to aver that illusion and reality are so much the same, that the loss of one leads to a concealment of the other. We can only repeat our suspicion that obsession with Nordic superiority ( which even free-minded Keyserling seems to have been unable to escape ) hardly makes for clarity of thought about fundamental things.

Anyhow, let us see how our Author proceeds to indicate a better remedy than *resignation* :

"Who are really happy and blessed among men ? They are those who have, from within, defeated, mastered and asserted their dominance over very difficult if not very rough external conditions. The prototype of the blessed on earth is the Saint. There has never been a saint who did not have to vanquish in himself a nature that he considered to be profoundly inadequate ; who did not throughout life ceaselessly discipline and re-discipline his lower nature. And there was never any authentic saint who did not radiate happiness ; many of them, indeed, did so even when they were being cruelly tortured. For joy is the characteristic emotion of a completely spiritualised life.

After the saint, the happiest man in the world is the hero. His example is even more instructive than the first, for heroism nearly always implies a tragedy, so that there is even less question here than elsewhere of the attainment of some humdrum happiness. In taking his own death as a matter of course, and playing with his own life, the hero affirms his personal identity at a superior degree. Man truly longs for happiness, *but in so far as happiness means plenitude*. But plenitude is only accessible to man when the whole field of his consciousness is impregnated by Spirit. And the artist alone can refer to the Spirit, man's vital centre, what does not participate in it.

But very few human beings are capable of heroism or saintliness. On the other hand, every one in whom spirit is dominant to howsoever small a degree, is capable of learning to *give* himself to his fate, with bared chest, renouncing all complaint against that which cannot be changed, and thus opening his soul to every influence that can evoke and strengthen the vital forces. That is the surest method of bearing one's destiny, however hard or tragic it may be. Once fate has thus been conquered there is no longer any external fate. Thereafter it is one with the man himself. Consequently, it belongs to the plane of art."

It is curious to note that our Author should consider it enough of

an improvement to supersede the word *resignation* by the phrase *giving oneself to fate with bared breast*. This, it is suggested, will lead to a conquest of fate, by becoming one with it,—not, let us hope, in the way Nordic man invites “the others” to become one with himself ! But this is only by the way.

The point of interest is to find the Author inevitably arrived at Art as a Panacea, in accordance with the recent tendency of European thought to which we referred in the beginning. But what about the failure to get at any clear meaning of the term Art, and of the working of its supposed function, to which we also referred ? Our Author, alas, proves himself to be no exception to the general rule. If his words are to be taken as a message, we can find nothing but commiseration in our heart for the state of mind of the receiving *chela*, trying to comprehend the content of Art as it exists in his Master’s mind, when he comes across the following pronouncement :

“The most striking illustration of the fact that art alone can perfect human life is furnished by the state and by its personification, the great statesmen. The Sovereign of the Universe wills by definition, as it were, to maintain in a state of positive co-operation all the beings created by Him and upon whom He relies, with the unique exception of those who threaten the general order. Consequently He does not give his preference to any one-sided programme, to any exclusive tendency, to any special creature, any state. The great statesman should therefore also know how to kill at the right moment, coerce, violate, imprison, confiscate, exile, ruin, deceive and lie ; if he only considers the needs and postulates of culture and liberty, he will never govern with benefit to his people. Hence the falsehood of nearly every political theory that has played a practical role, and particularly the Benthamite theory that the greatest happiness of the greatest number, conceived of according to the “progressist” prejudice, constitutes the end of all government.”

As for ourselves, this leaves us breathless, but with the consolation that it doesn’t matter, further comment being needless.

Surendranath Tagore.

## GUJARATA AND ITS LITERATURE :

By Kanaïyalal M. Munshi, B. A., LL.B.,

With a Foreword by Mahatma Gandhi.

( Longmans, Green &amp; Co. Ltd. )

SJT. KANAİYALAL MUNSHI needs no introduction at our hands. As a *litterateur* of versatile genius he has won an all-India fame and there is hardly any phase of the life and letters in Gujarata that has not received enrichment through his creative art or social service. That a gifted writer like Munshiji undertook to place before the English-reading public a connected story of Gujarata and its literature is in itself a literary event for which Gujarata may well feel proud and, at the same time, feel thankful to the author.

The book under review is divided in three parts. The first part covers the period beginning roughly with 200 A. D. and ending with 1297 A.D. After describing the land and the people of the province from both the geographical and linguistic points of view, Munshiji raises two important questions : Who were the original dwellers of the land which is now known as Gujarata ? When did the Aryans come and settle in it ? At the present stage of our knowledge it is well-nigh impossible to offer any clear-cut answer to these queries, but Sjt. Munshi's attempt at throwing light on the obscurities of the ancient history of Gujarata reveals his penetrating study of the *Puranas*. According to him, "the first wave of Aryan immigrants, perhaps, consisted of the Saryatas, a tribe claiming descent from Manu, and the Bhrgus, the martial priests who claimed their descent from the sage Bhrgu." Anartta, son of Saryati, gave his name to North Gujarata, and Anarttapura ( Mod. Vadanagara ) was one of the earliest centres of Aryan culture. Successive waves of similar Aryan migrations submerged the whole of Gujarata ; the development of the language and literature of these Aryan colonies of the Western India is historically traced in the second chapter of this part. We are told ( p. 19 ) : "it is more than probable that towards the composition of the *Harivansa*, the *Matsya*, and the *Markandeya Puranas*, the people of Gujarata made no small contribution." A systematic and sympathetic treatment of the literary endeavours of a series of subsequent writers ( e. g. Padalīpta, Bhatti, Haribhadra, Udyotana, Siddharshi, Uvvata, Hemacandra and his pupils, Somesvara ) brings the first part of the work to a close.

The second part deals with the literature written in Old Gujarati

( A. D. 1297-1852 ). In this part the effects of the Mussalman occupation of the province on its literature, the waning influence of Sanskrit, typical works written in Old Gujarati, evolution of Old Gujarati, folk-songs and *Rasa* literature, the prose *Kathas* through which the Jaina sadhus popularised their teachings, Padmanabha and the heroic poetry, Bhalana and the Puranic movement: all these topics have been discussed, in their historical sequence, with an admirable blend of erudition and understanding. Munshiji's study of the Bhakti cult as reflected in the devotional *padas* of Mirabai, the greatest poetess of Western India, and in the *bhajanas* of Narsinha Mehta, "the noblest figure of vanished Gujarata," makes for us an ennobling reading ( Chap. IV, pp. 125-149 ). The same scholarship, sympathy and accomplished judgement, as one may expect from Sjt. Munshi, shine also in subsequent chapters dealing with Akho and his gospel of other-worldliness, Premananda who had pledged himself to make the Gujarati language "lovely and rich with implied meanings" so that she might "reach the pedestal occupied by the language of gods ( Sanskrit )," Samalabhata, and that writer of exquisite lyrics, Dayarama, with whom "Old Gujarati died ; from its ashes, new Gujarata, phoenix-like, was born with Narmadashankar."

The third part is devoted to Modern Gujarati ( 1852-1934 A. D. ). After an intelligent literary discussion of the works of Ranchhodbhai Girdharbhai, the Poet Dalpatram Dahyabhai, Narmadashankar—"Father of Modern Gujarati prose", Ranchhodbhai Udayaram, Mahipatram Rupram, Goverdhanram Tripathi, Manilal Dvivedi, Narsimhrao Divatia, Sir Ramanbhai Nilkanth, Khabardar, Thakore, Nanalal Kavi and others, Munshiji devotes a whole chapter on "Mahatma Gandhi and the Triumph of Aryan Culture." In order to show how Gandhiji has given to Gujarati prose a new sense of power, let us quote a few lines from the work under review : "An unerring sense of proportion keeps both expression and imagination ( in Gandhiji's writings ) under judicious restraint. The literary element is always subordinated to the author's prime motive, which is to touch the living chord in the reader's heart and vivify him into action. Sometimes, and particularly in *Atmakatha*, the style carries itself with grace. . . . With him beauty of expression has to be a humble housemaid to Truth. And the reader invariably falls under the spell of 'the bare, sheer, penetrating power of every line' of his, which, under the stress of some great emotion, attains biblical strength" ( p. 312 ).

No survey of Modern Gujarati literature can be complete without

a reference to Sjt. Munshi's own writings. And as it would be bad taste for a writer to write at length about his own works, the task of reviewing Munshiji's contribution to Gujarati Literature was entrusted to Dr. Taraporewala, who has accomplished it with great credit.

Sjt. Munshi's evaluation of contemporary Gujarati literature is throughout just and absorbing. It shows how he is sensitive to literary effects and his honest remarks will provide, we feel sure, a needed corrective to the shoddy standards found in some contemporary criticism in Gujarat.

Munshiji's love of his own land can be unmistakably perceived throughout this work. He views literature not as a mere academic product but as an expression of the national life itself, hence it is most fitting that his survey of Gujarati literature has a background of the history and culture of India. In conclusion, he asserts : "Gujarat . . . can have no meaning and no future except as an expression of Indian culture."

Manilal Patel.

ADARSHA SADHU ( an ideal monk )

By A. J. Sunvala, B.A., LL.B.

( Shri Vizay Dharmasuri, Jain Granthmala No. 12 ),

Cambridge, University Press, 1934.

*Five shillings net.*

THE future historian of the period of renaissance of Indian religions, through which we are passing, will have to accord to the Jaina preceptor, Vijaya Dharma Suri, one of the foremost places among those, who, having brought to bear upon the ancient wisdom a modern and scientific outlook, have endeavoured to rescue from the tyranny of words and ritual the true spirit of idealism and sacrifice, which it represents. The author, who wields a facile pen, having tried to describe in a brisk and fascinating, though somewhat verbose, style not only the 'public' and 'private', but also the 'inner or heavenly life', as he puts it ( p. 169 ) of this great Jaina monk, a considerable part of the book has come to be occupied by such reflections and remarks about the greatness of his personality as would admit of a much wider application. However, the facts, objectively presented, about the life of Vijaya Dharma Suri are, in themselves, enough to convince us, that the transformation of a boy of average intellect, addicted to gambling, into a man of such extraordinary vigour and



insight could not have come about, unless his soul had been bestowed from above a touch of the Infinite, had heard the voice of the Omniscient. The present, newly revised and enlarged edition of the book, which was first published in 1922, has been happily introduced to the public through a prefatory note, written by Prof. F. W. Thomas and a touching foreward by the late Prof. Sylvain Levi. A small index at the end would, unquestionably, add to the usefulness of the publication, when it comes to a further revision of the work.

V. V. Gokhale.

RIDDLE OF LIFE SOLVED : By Swami Raghunath Rai, M. A.  
( Publisher: Prof. H. C. Kumar, Sevakung  
Student's Home, Karachi ).

To many, Life is a mystery as well as miracle ; hence the cry, "If thou speakest not, I shall fill my heart with silence and endure it." But in every generation there have been a few who force the Sphinx to speak to them. Swami Raghunath Rai, some of whose discourses delivered recently in Karachi have been abridged and embodied in the publication under review, is one of those persons whose spirit of earnestness and enquiry is indomitable.

*Riddle of Life Solved* deals principally with the puzzling problem of Destiny and Free Will, with its auxiliaries: Self and Soul, *Aham Brahmi Asmi*, Law of Happiness, Culture and *Kundalini*, *Brahmacharya*, Teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The conclusion reached by the Swami as a result of his study and self-realization is :

"Destiny relates to the past *karma*-created circumstances, whereas Freewill pertains to the amendment of character, from which the future merits and demerits have to proceed. Character is always amenable to reformation, but Destiny is not so, except in the case of a perfect Yogi, whose tremendous bonfire of universal love conflagrates all his past Karmas by inspiring all his reactionaries with absolute love for him."

The subject has been treated in a spirit of scientific criticism and simplicity of style, which help the lay reader to throw open some of the windows of his own understanding.

G. M.

A MOTHER'S SACRIFICE : By A. S. P. Ayyar, M.A., I.C.S.  
(Publishers: P. R. Rama Iyar & Co. Ltd., Madras ).

THIS is a dramatic version of the well-known story of the supreme self-sacrifice of Punna, the wet-nurse of Udai Singh, the infant prince of Chitor, whose name, in the annals of Rajputana, is a by-word for devotion to duty. It is a play in three Acts, each consisting of three scenes, all of which are sketched out with telling effect.

Mr. Ayyar, who has a rare *forte* for story-telling, has written a play, which is rich in its potentialities for the stage. The triumph of loyalty to one's country over self-interest, the strength which such loyalty confers on a person, howsoever humble his or her station in life, the hypocrisy of time-servers, the love of the mother for her child but her greater love for the Motherland whose salt she has eaten,—all these are touched upon, in the play, in a setting of scenes, of absorbing interest. Punna's heroism truly shines forth as a diamond. *A Mother's sacrifice* is a little saga after the patriot's own heart.

G. M.

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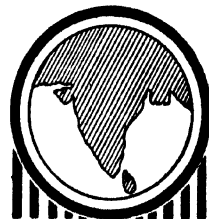
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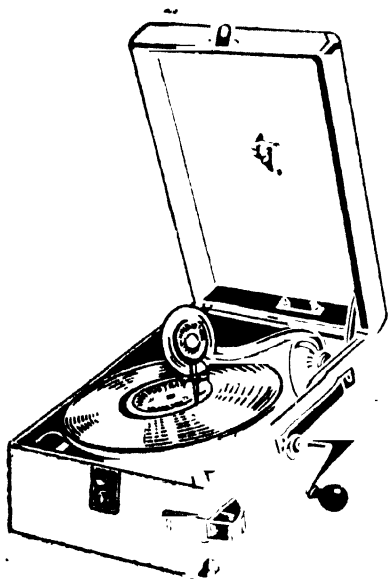


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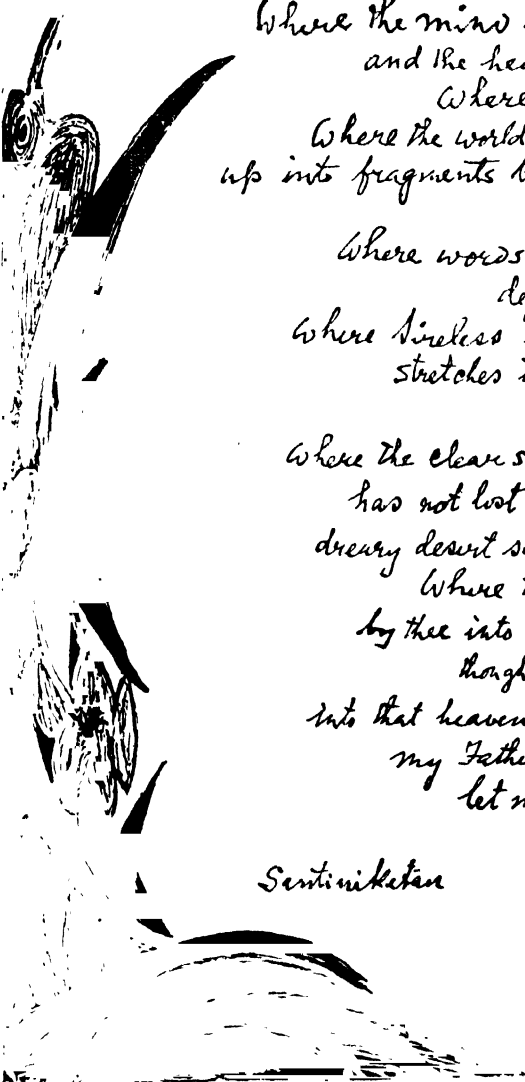
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*Reproductions of paintings of Rabindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose.*





Where the mind is without fear  
and the head is held high,  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken  
up into fragments by narrow domestic  
walls;

Where words come out from the  
depth of truth;  
Where limitless striving  
stretches its arms towards  
perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason  
has not lost its way into the  
dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward  
by thee into ever-widening  
thought and action —  
into that heaven of freedom,  
my Father,

let my country awake.

Santiniketan

Rabindranath Tagore



# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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November

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## MAN AND WOMAN

( Chapter from *A Diary of the Five Elements* )<sup>1</sup>

Rabindranath Tagore

SAMIR started the discussion saying : "In English literature, whether prose or poetry, the characters of hero and heroine are equally developed. Neither Othello nor Iago are less vivid than Desdemona ; Anthony, even as subdued by the dusky coils of Cleopatra's witchery, stands high like the ivy-covered ruin of a triumphal tower ; and, for all her beauty and sweetness, the Bride of Lammermoor doesn't draw us away from the sombre, tragic figure of Ravenswood. But, in our own stories, the heroine is always decidedly predominant. Nagendra<sup>2</sup> pales before the brilliance of Kunda-nandini and Surya-mukhi ; Gobinda-lal is hardly visible beside Rohini and Bhramar ; Nabakumar is but a petty satellite of resplendent Kapal-kundala. The same is the case with our older ballads. In the desert expanse of Kavi Kankan's<sup>3</sup> *Chandi*, only Phullara and Khullana have some little life and movement, his *vyadha* ( hunter ) being only an immobile monstrosity, and Dhanapati and his son amounting to nothing at all. Thus man, in Bengali literature, appears supinely stretched on the dust like *Mahadeva*,<sup>4</sup> while woman, sprightly and vivacious, stands rampant over him. Now, what can be the reason of this ?"

---

1. See footnote under article "Laughter" in Vol. II, part II of this Journal.—*Ed.*

2. This and the following characters are from the novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the celebrated Bengali novelist of the 19th century.—*Ed.*

3. A Bengali poet of the 16th century.—*Ed.*

4. In one of her mythical forms, *Shakti* ( Divine Power ) is depicted as Kali, in the rage of battle with the forces of evil, standing on the breast of prostrate Shiva the Good ( *Mahadeva* ).—*Tr.*

Srotaswini made no secret of her eagerness to hear what our reply to Samir's question might be ; but Deepti, pretending not to care, fastened her eyes on a book lying open on the table before her.

Khiti was the first to come forward. "The particular stories of Bankim," said he, "from which you draw your examples, are mostly concerned with feeling, not with doing. In the region of emotion, woman naturally stands supreme ; man is the lord of the field of action."

No longer able to keep up her pretence, Deepti impatiently pushed away her book, as she cried: "Isn't the character of Bimala in *Durgesh-nandini* brought out by what she does,—which of its heroes has shown such skill, such liveliness, such constancy ? In *Ananda Math* we have a story of action ; there the activities of Satyananda, Jivananda, and the other inmates of the monastery, are to be found only in the author's descriptions ; if any one of its characters is really up and doing, that's the woman, Shanti. And who's the master-worker in *Devi Chaudhurani* ?—again a woman, her masterfulness by no means confined to the home, either !"

"Khiti, my dear fellow," expostulated Samir, "your methodical classifications are all right in their way, but you mustn't expect them to hold in cases such as this. On the chess board it's possible to have evenly arranged black and white squares of equal size and shape, because the actors on it are wooden pieces. But human characters don't move according to set rules. For all the care with which your analysis may tidy them up in separate compartments,—action, emotion ; real, ideal,—all that gets upset in the turmoil of life. If the fire of life hadn't been burning underneath the cauldron of Society, its human elements might have subsided into restful layers, but when vital force flares up, they seethe and mingle into wonderful, unlooked-for combinations. And of these literature is a quivering reflection. It's hopeless to try to bunch together literary characters under distinctive labels, according to some canon of criticism. Nor can you lay it down as a doctrine that woman feels more intensely than man,—what about the devastating emotions of Othello, the raging storm in the heart of King Lear ?"

Vyom made a gesture of impatience. "You people are arguing superficially," he complained. "If you think deeply you'll see that, in woman, action is of the essence ; that she has no proper scope except in the field of work. Man is the hermit, ever aloof, lonely by preference. Lying on his back, as a shepherd of Chaldea, his gaze

riveted on the stars coursing through the night, he finds his happiness. But what woman would waste her time in the pursuit of knowledge with no worldly value? If, as Khiti would have it, man's chief concern had really been action, then human society couldn't have made such progress; new ideas, new principles, would never have been discovered. Only in solitude, in the joy of leisure, can wisdom be born. It's woman who is characteristically the worker. She's immersed and entangled in work, with no gaps in her activity. She dwells amongst men, as the upholder of society. She can truly give companionship, for she never stands apart, but comes into immediate contact——"

"Oh, bother your paradoxes!" exclaimed Deepti. "I can never make head or tail of them. Not that I dispute women's ability to do big things,—my complaint is, you men don't let them."

"Not man, but the bondage of her own work stands in woman's way," persisted Vyom in reply. "Just as burning coal begets the ash that smothers its flame, so is woman hampered by the endless activity of her home life, which leaves her no breathing spaces of leisure. How tremendous is the conflagration when, on occasion, she is cleared of encumbering ashes and thrown into the business of the outside world! Man is a slow plodder through his thorny path of manifold anxieties; all these are burnt away when woman joins him with her revolutionary enthusiasm. This same fire of hers lights her home of an evening, provides warmth for the cold wayfarer, makes food for the hungry. What's there to be so surprised at if it should have happened to flame up splendidly in our literature?"

"To put it more plainly," I suggested, "the feminine characters in Bengali literature are brighter because the women of our country are really superior to our men."

Srotaswini's face was suffused with a smile at the compliment.

"You do exaggerate so!" remarked Deepti—not, however, by way of protest. I could see that Miss Deepti was playing to draw out more of my song of praise, and I told her so, adding that women always take special delight in being flattered. To which she retorted with a vigorous shake of her head.

"But it's true," softly admitted Srotaswini. "Harsh criticism hurts us deeply, while kind words are ever so heartening." Woman though she is, Srotaswini never shirks the facts.

"There's a reason behind it," I went on. "Amongst writers the poet, amongst artists the singer, are particularly fond of the sweets of



praise. Those whose function it is to appeal to the hearts of men, measure their success by the appreciation they receive. Other kinds of work leave tangible fruit from which their merits can be judged, but of the result of an attempt to win the heart there's no test save the pleasure given."

"Not only that," added Samir, "but absence of enthusiasm roused in the artist himself, detracts from his power of appeal. Unless the listener's applause comes forward to meet the singer half way, the latter's talent doesn't attain its fullest expression. So praise isn't only a reward, it's a means of ensuring success."

"Yes," I agreed, "and the giving of joy is likewise woman's chief vocation. Unless she makes a poem, a song, of her life, she fails in its purpose. And praise is dear to her, not merely for feeding her pride, but inasmuch as she is fulfilled by it. Social censure is so terrible for her because fault-finding wounds the very core of her being."

"What you've said," objected Khiti, "has been delightful to hear, very poetically rounded off, indeed. But let's try to come nearer to the facts. Man, whose sphere of influence extends beyond his habitation, and into the future, isn't so dependent on immediate praise or blame; his distant hopes, his wide-ranging imagination, give him the strength to pursue a steadfast course in the teeth of indifference, calumny, or opposition. Woman's scope of work is narrow; she hasn't to do with large space or time, her duty's done if she but please her husband and children, relations and neighbours. The commerce of her life thus being on a cash basis, she can ill afford the discredit of social obloquy. What she gets here and now, is all she ever gets: her profit and loss account is cast up within the present; hence she bargains so closely and insists on realising every bit of her dues."

Deepti did not conceal her annoyance with this view, and cast about to show examples of women in Europe and America famed for their world-wide beneficence.

"Largeness and greatness," Srotaswini pointed out, "aren't always the same thing. Woman's field of action may not be large, but I don't feel that her work is any the less glorious. Flesh and bone take up most of the space, but the small heart does its all-important work behind the scenes: woman reigns in the heart of the human world. The steeds of our masculine divinities are bulls and buffaloes and such-like emblems of strength, while our goddesses are seated on the multi-petalled lotus, established in eternal Beauty.

"— Just think of the world, so sorely stricken with sorrow and

disease, hunger and weariness, weltering amidst the piled-up dust raised at every turn of its labouring wheels: and then of the smiling, patient figure of all-suffering woman by its side, soothing with her soft touch its fevered brow, clearing away with her deft hands all baneful litter, bringing welfare and peace wherever her place may be, providing the infinite love needed for the safe-keep of its home life. Should you still say that because woman's field of work is narrow, it's devoid of greatness? If I must be reborn on earth, I'd again be a woman."

After this, none of us felt up to breaking the silence, a silence that woefully abashed poor Srotaswini, who turned to me penitently, pleading: "You were about to say something about the women of our country, which I'm afraid we cut short by our cross arguments."

"I was saying," I repeated, "that the women of our country are superior to our men."

"The proofs?" demanded Khiti.

"The proofs are all about us, in every home, in our own minds," I replied. "You know the kind of river we have in the central parts of India,—mostly a parched stretch of sun-burnt sand, with a slender, deliciously cool, crystal stream modestly rippling along one edge. The sight reminds me of our own society. In it we men, inert and feckless, lie heaped about, scattered by every wind that blows, unable to unite in common endeavour, though trodden down by all who've passed over us, the towers of our flighty ambition crumbling away as soon as raised; and by our side are our women, content to flow along their lower level, dispensing the life-giving nectar of their tireless ministration, with their unremitting labours of love ever directed to the self-same end. On their side is all the beauty and fruitfulness: on ours only the glitter of the desert, the vast emptiness of arid servitude. What say you, Samir?"

Casting a mischievous side-glance at the girls, Samir smilingly replied: "There are two living reasons,—who shall be nameless,—why we cannot afford to indulge in self-depreciation at this meeting. One place in all the world we have, where the merits of the man of Bengal are freely acknowledged and that's his home; there he's not merely master, but divinity. I put it to you, old fellow, what's the earthly good of divulging it to our devotees that their idols are but made of straw and plaster? To whom are we to return the blossoms of their heart offered at our feet? If we don't hold our heads high on the pedestal where we've been put, if we refuse to shine, unprotesting, in the light of the lamps of their worship, how are they

to find satisfaction, where are we to find glory ? As little girls they played with their clay dolls, pretending they were alive ; as women they play at the worship of their human idols, as if they were divine. Had her doll been broken, the girl would have cried her heart out ; will not the woman grieve as piteously if her idol be destroyed ? Embellishment isn't needed in order to reverence real manhood,—where that's lacking, the man has to be decked up as a divinity."

"A real man," sneered Deepti, "would have felt ashamed to accept the place due to a divinity,— even if he had to, he'd at least have tried to become worthy of it. But our men shamelessly exploit the idolatry of their womenfolk ; what's more, finding the offerings of worship to be now-a-days falling off, they've taken to lecturing women on the shortcomings of their devotion, instead of being better employed attending to their own neglected responsibilities. Their ridicule of the modern emancipated girl only recoils on themselves. What kind of *karma*, I wonder, must the Bengali woman have gathered in her past life, to be reborn amidst such masculine demi-gods !—just see, how divine they look, how divinely they behave !"

This outburst was not to Srotaswini's taste. "The tone of the discussion," she protested, "is getting sharper and sharper, and the song of our praise is losing its charm. If we happen to rate our men higher than they deserve, don't they do the same with us ? If they're not *devas*,\* neither are we *devis*. But if we choose to be divinities to each other, why quarrel over it ?"

"Blessed, O Devi," said I, "is your message of peace, as timely as it's sweetly given. Our discussion could hardly have been held down within the bounds of truth, under the sting of Deepti's darts. This much I now feel bound to avow : you are *devis* only in our poems, we are *devas* in the temple of your homes. So, while you needs must be content with a few *mantrams*, ancient or modern, chanted in your praise, we enjoy all the substantial offerings. It's ludicrous to claim in our country that equal privileges are accorded to your sex. The whole world is open to us, the rest of it left for you,—the feast is ours, the leavings yours. For man the open air, the beauties of nature, the health of travel ; for woman a corner of the home, the side of the sick-bed, at best a peep through the window.

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\* *Deva* means a God ; *Devi* means a Goddess ; the latter is also a term of respect applied to gentlewomen.

It takes but little reflection to reveal the difference between the two kinds of divinities !

"——On the other hand, we must remember that our men have little of real work to do, that our only life is home life, and the making or breaking of the home is in women's hands,—a power for good or evil that they've wielded for ages. Just as the shapely steam-boat tows the ungainly lumbering barge along, or against, the current, so does the Bengali woman drag the burdensome encumbrance, called her husband, through the various cross-currents of personal and social duties. In other countries the men develop special characteristics of their own by dint of their struggles in the political or commercial arena. Our mother-ridden, wife-driven men are all of the same domesticated pattern. Not only are they deprived of the opportunity to exercise their faculties in the large field of great ideas, great deeds, but they've to submit with bowed heads to the humiliations and disabilities of their political subjection. Our women fortunately aren't required to seek their life's work outside the home: like flower and fruit on the tree, it duly comes upon them. A woman's duties begin as soon as she begins to love : her thought and feeling, her reason and action, her whole character awakens at its touch. Outside political changes don't hamper her work, or detract from its greatness. The subjugation of the nation can't shackle her natural powers."

"The day has now come," I concluded, turning again towards Srotaswini, "when the new ideals and standards of conduct, imported from foreign history, are impelling us into larger fields of activity. But rusty wheels make more noise than progress ; damp logs refuse to take fire, or if they do, they give out more smoke than flame. We've become too accustomed to think superficially, to talk lightly, to split up into petty factions at the least provocation. But all the time, as I was saying, you women have been steadily at work in the good old way. So it should be easier for you than for us, to learn to fit into the new order, to make it part of our life."

Srotaswini paused awhile in thought before she plaintively murmured : "If only we knew what we should now do, and how to do it, we could at least try our best."

"You need do no more," I cried, "than be as you are. Let people see what truth and grace and simplicity look like when personified ! In the home where *Lakshmi*\* is enthroned, disarray or

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\* The goddess of grace and welfare. She is also identified with ideal womanhood.

ugliness is never allowed. Because she's not with us men in the work we're doing, there's all this disorder and unseemly turbulence. If you, cultured women, will come and take your stand on the rubbish heaped up by our work, then shall *Lakshmi* herself be established, and decency and harmony prevail in it likewise."

Throwing a grateful look towards me, Srotaswini left our room to attend to her household duties, and Deepti followed after.

At their departure Khiti heaved a sigh of relief. "At last," exclaimed he, "the air is clear of the fumes of gallantry ! After meekly putting up so long with the altitude of your soaring sentiments, I feel I may requisition as much latitude for the several remarks I have to make.

"——We plume ourselves on our capacity to appreciate any subject from each and every standpoint. But I doubt whether that's at all a good quality. I call it mental greediness. The wise diner is he who is partial to certain kinds of food, and so can fully relish and profit by what he eats. The voracious mind, devoid of partiality which gobbles up all that is set before it, thinks it's making a big feast, but actually gets less out of it. When such a mind happens, perchance, to take a particular fancy, it loses all sense of proportion, and its very excesses block the way to truth. Mr. President, sir, I accuse your mind of this kind of partiality in the one and only case of Woman, and therefore you're not going to have the last word this time !

"——In the wider range of man's activity there's bound to be room for errors and omissions. Moreover to deal with the work of his larger field, man's natural faculties are not sufficient, but special powers have to be cultivated. In woman's narrower life she can manage well enough with her natural gifts alone ; but simply because these are inborn, I can't allow them to be cracked up as superior to acquired human culture. The manly character that's been scarred in the stern battle of life, hardened by its struggles against all kinds of ugliness, and isn't consequently finished off by the flawless lines of a cheap harmony,—it has a beauty of its own, grander than that which is merely nice and pretty within narrow limits.

"——I cry shame on you for the injustice you've been doing to the men of our country. There are, doubtless, plenty of unmanly men in the world, and I'm even prepared to concede that the number of them is larger in our country. The reason I've already indicated. It's not easy to achieve the full stature of manhood, which is priceless because

of its rarity. Nature herself furnishes the ingredients for the making of ideal woman. But man is not nature's favourite, and has to depend for his equipment on what he can loot from the storehouse of world forces. That's why you find so many imperfect men in the world. But where amongst ideal women do you get the equal of the perfect man? I ask you, further, isn't it our women who are primarily to blame for the defects of our men,—with their blind superstitions, their clogging affections, their petty jealousies? The sacrifices of women—impelled by their inclinations—are for their children, for those whom they love. But man is called upon to make his sacrifices against inclination. This should be kept in mind when making comparison.

“—I do hope that by this time Srotaswini and Deepti are having a hearty laugh at the outrageous praises you've been lavishing on their sex. If not, my respect for them will suffer. Surely they're aware of their own limitations! Vanity may be pardonable when it's a pose for deluding others, provided it's mitigated by a secret smile at its own absurdity. But the solemn pride of self-delusion which seriously takes in empty compliments,—specially if it happens to possess a woman,—betrays a lack of humour which is as laughable as it is deplorable.

“—One last word I must add, though reluctantly, only to balance the scales of your one-sided conclusion so far. If you assert that women are always and everywhere so many *Lakshmis*, that's nothing short of a libel on the goddess. It's all very well to laud natural instinct to the skies, but it has its bad side as well as its good. You'll surely not call me to order, now that the girls are away, if I remind you of the disasters that befall our homes by reason of its blind working in our woman, unchecked by reason. Woman's seat may be the bosom of society, but isn't it just the burden of superstition and unregulated feeling with which she weigh it down, that makes the task of its uplift so difficult? That's so, you'll claim, because she hasn't been educated :—no, say I, it's because of her incorrigible sentimentality.

“—But, with your chivalry so tensely strung up, I'm afraid to face the piercing retorts you'll be hurling at me! In the undisturbed conviction of being in the right, let me hie away,—to catch a train.”

## AWAKENING

BEHIND an infinite secrecy of the dark  
from which the world of prying lights was shut out  
there walked in the Destroyer,  
and underneath the pall of an ominous hush  
rehearsed reparation in the deep of my being.  
At last the stage was made vacant  
for the new act of life's play,  
when a fiery finger from the sky touched a fringe of the darkness  
and a lightning thrill pierced the immensity of sleep  
breaking it to pieces.  
A stream of awakening began to course through the veins  
of a blind inertness—  
as the first flood of the rainy June pursues its branching path  
amidst the emptiness of a dry river bed.  
Big boulders of shadows barricaded the passage of light  
and created confusion—  
till they were swept away and the spirit of new life  
unbared herself in a luminous horizon of peace.  
'This body of mine—the carrier of the burden of a past—  
seemed to me like an exhausted cloud  
slipping off from the listless arm of the morning.  
I felt freed from its clasp  
in the heart of an incorporeal light  
at the furthest shore of evanescent things.

*Rabindranath Tagore*

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Translated by the author from the original Bengali. This is the first poem written by him after his recent illness.—*Ed.*

## THE TEN CHIEF UPANISHADS

&

### Two New Translators

Ernest Rhys

"He who has found Spirit, is Spirit. He goes  
beyond sorrow, sin, death, the knots of his  
heart unloosed. This is that ancient Truth."  
Sage Angiras declared.

THOSE memorable sentences come from the Fifth of the Ten Upanishads in this volume translated by Shree Purohit Swami and Mr. W. B. Yeats.\*

"Here we offer you," they say, "the oldest philosophical compositions of the world, sung long before they were written down." That was probably long before Buddha was born; and now these two new translators have worked with the modern reader in mind, and tried to put into clear idiomatic English the impressive and often difficult Sanskrit original. As we know, Mr. W.B. Yeats is a master of English, in prose as well as in verse, with a creative sense of the living word, and Shree Purohit Swami is a master of Sanskrit as well as other Indian tongues: the result is a book unique of its kind.

Since, many years ago, Rhys Davids' little book on Buddhism first opened an Indian door to one's Celtic imagination, no single work from the East has so impressed me as this volume of the Hindu Scriptures.

In his preface Mr. Yeats alludes to the Orientation that many of us, those especially with a Celtic strain, feel instinctively. If I may pause to trace the erratic path followed in my own tardy induction to Indian philosophy, let me remember, it was Spinoza among the Western philosophers who first led me along the pathway. It must have been about the same time that in my first acquaintance with W. B. Yeats he told me about one of his Indian friends in London, Mohini. Some sayings of Mohini even found their way into Yeats'

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\* London: Faber & Faber Limited (7s. 6d. net).



verse. Then too the Vedic Hymns led me to the "Sacred Books of the East," edited by Max Müller, which were to be found on the shelves at the British Museum Reading-room, a standing temptation ! So the Via Media between East and West widened, and it was easy to turn from Gautama to Plato.

Indian readers will understand one's quoting the words in which the Greek maiden, Diotima, tells Socrates about the quest of the Beauty Eternal : "not growing or decaying, absolute, simple and everlasting." They sound as if Diotima was versed in the Ideal Philosophy which found its way from India to the Hellenic world ; and that recalls a later student of the ancient religions, Ernest Renan. You know the prayer he made at Athens after his pilgrimage to the Acropolis, when he too had come to understand the Beauty Eternal :

"I have come late to the threshold of thy Mysteries:  
I bring to thy altar much remorse. To find it I have had  
to make infinite researches. The Initiation that thou  
conferrest on the Athenian born by a smile, I have  
attained only by force of deep reflection, and at the  
price of long effort."

These stages on the pathway, so far apart, lead to another that comes comparatively late in the journey,—the stage marked by the poems, plays and stories, of Rabindranath Tagore. Western readers who were led by Sir William Rothenstein and Mr. W. B. Yeats to read *Gitanjali* and the books that followed, will not forget the rare fresh impetus given to their study of the old Indian Religions by his rare lyric gift and imaginative phantasy.

One poem in *Gitanjali* quoted in what is perhaps the best of all the Wisdom Anthologies, Robert Bridges' "Spirit of Man", may serve as a clue in the long labyrinth of East and West :—

"Thou art the sky and thou art the nest  
as well.

O thou beautiful, there in the nest it  
is thy love that encloses the soul with  
colours and sounds and odours.

There comes the morning with the  
golden basket in her right hand bearing  
the wreath of beauty, silently to crown  
the earth.

And there comes the evening over  
the lonely meadows deserted by herds,

through trackless paths. carrying cool  
draughts of peace in her golden pitcher  
from the western ocean of rest.

But there, where spreads the infinite  
sky for the soul to take her flight in,  
reigns the stainless white radiance.  
There is no day nor night, nor form nor  
colour, and never, never a word."

We have learnt to look upon Tagore, as upon St. Augustine, as among the interpreters of Spiritual Philosophy which, Oriental in its ancestry, came to have a profound new significance for the Western world. There are passages in *The City of God* which might almost have been written by the author of *Gitanjali*: as where St. Augustine says:—

"Yet I love a kind of Light, and of Melody and of Fragrance,  
and a kind of Food, and a manner of Embrace, when I love  
my God. And then there shineth into my soul what Space  
containeth not and Time taketh not."

In the Upanishads we come upon many pages in which the spiritual sense of Food is dwelt upon with the same significance. In the Tenth, which tersely translates the "*Debates in the Forest*," Widagdha Shakala asks:

"What are the six gods ?"  
"Fire, earth, wind, air, sun, sky ; all the  
world lives therein."  
"What are the three gods ?"  
"The three worlds; all the gods live therein."  
"What are the two gods ?"  
"Food and Breath."

That passage recalls the chapter in Purohit Swami's book "An Indian Monk," where he tells how in his ascetic discipline he had brought himself almost to the point of doing without food altogether. But in the Upanishads, again and again, we find a recognition of Food along with the Breath, and the Spirit of the god of Food. So too in the Tenth Upanishad, the king Janaka says to Yajnyawalkya at whose feet he bows :

"Lord! I do not know where I shall go."  
"But I can tell you where ?"  
"Tell me."  
"In the right eye Self lives and kindles the light; in the left  
eye his queen. They meet in the hollow of the heart, rest in the

veins, and move through the artery that rises upward from the heart. The veins are rooted in the heart and through the heart goes a Food finer than the food that nourishes the body."

There in brief is the interpretation of the divine Food that is more than food, like the manna that drops from heaven. It is but one more revealing, recreating, detail of the august argument that runs throughout the Upanishads. I envy Mr. Yeats his labour of love in working over these Sanskrit texts with Shree Purohit. There are verses in almost every page of a lyrical loveliness which might easily have tempted him into weaving them anew into a metrical pattern.

"Who is awake, who creates lovely dreams,  
when man is lost in sleep ? He through  
whom all things live, beyond whom none  
can go; pure, powerful, immortal Spirit."

"Everything owes life and movement to Spirit.  
Spirit strikes terror, hangs like a thunder-  
bolt overhead; find it, find immortality."

"In a beautiful golden scabbard hides  
the stainless invisible luminous Spirit. . . .  
Spirit is everywhere, upon the right, upon  
the left, above, below, behind, in front,  
What is the world but Spirit?"

So the revelation of the real, the spiritual, Self, in the Upanishads comes like a breath of new life to the Western mind :

"The Self brings everything; for thereby  
everything is known. He is the footprint  
that brings a man to his goal. He who knows  
this attains name and fame. . . . nearer  
than all else, dearer than anything. If a  
man call anything dearer than Self he will  
lose what is here; of a certainty he will  
lose it, for Self is God . . . . Who worships  
Self as Love, his Love never shall perish."

In the West we have been accustomed to look upon Self as an egoistic, a restrictively selfish, thing. It is an inspiring doctrine that the true Self is touched with fire, with the Infinite Spirit of Man. We are warned in the Upanishads that if Self is misunderstood it is of no service to the soul of man : "it remains like the unread Vedas,\* or a deed not done."

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\* One cannot but enter a protest in passing against the substitution of that ugly and, to English ears unimpressive word 'Vedas' for the older term to which we had grown accustomed—the Vedas. In dealing with an ancient tongue, it is well to remember that the modern equivalent, if it is to be idiomatic, must not be one to call up awkward associations or leave the reader questioning.

As one who has no Sanskrit, I cannot in closing pretend to a scholarly verdict on this rare volume. But in English the translators are so well accorded, in getting the modern equation, that one is left convinced of the rightness and naturalness of the pages in which they have collaborated. Indeed one may go so far as to say they have added another Classic to Anglo-Indian literature.

In his preamble to the book Mr. Yeats enters upon an interesting self-revealing account of his own initiation into Indian philosophy, and incidentally pays tribute to his old friend the poet, George Russell (A.E.). It serves to recall that 'A.E.'s book, *The Avatars*, is one of the most imaginative outcomes in English of the study of Oriental Mysticism by a poet of Celtic stock. It is significant that to two Irish poets and to two Welsh scholars\* we should owe so much of our knowledge of the Sacred Books of the East.

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\* Sir William Jones and Rhys Davids.



folk-dancer of Gujarat

By Nandalal Bose

## THE DANCE IN INDIA

Sreemati Pratima Tagore

LONG ago, in India, the art of dancing had fully developed and could express the highest reaches of human thought and feeling. This can be seen in many ancient paintings and especially in the cave frescoes of Ajanta and Bagh. Moreover, dancing held a large and important place in the cultural life of India.

In order to know what Indian dance is, and to understand its significance, we should need to learn all we can about the direction and inclination of Indian thought. The Indian mind has always tried to understand the inner problems of the soul and to solve the mystery of personality. Therefore, not only our philosophy, but also our society, our art, our literature, our music, and even our present day politics, tend to develop and reflect the spiritual faculties of our race.

We have three kinds of representative Indian dance which still exist : the South Indian dance, the Manipuri dance, and the North Indian dance. The South Indian dance is very ancient in origin and its influence has spread even to the Far East ; it is to be seen in Java, Indo China, Burma, Ceylon, and even in China and Japan. In the same way the influence of Indian fresco-painting can be seen in Boro Budur, in Anuradhapura, in Sigiria, all of which date from the Buddhist era.

The classical dance of the South expresses six kinds of human emotion ; in Sanskrit we call them 'Rasa', a word which is as untranslatable as the German word 'stimmung'. The different 'Rasas' in the art of the dance represent the following: parental feeling, friendship, conjugal love, strength, heroism and humour.

In our ancient scripture, *Natyastra*, there are numerous descriptions of the various forms of feeling that have a universal aspect. We also find therein a list of the qualities an artist should possess if he wants to dedicate his life to the art of dancing. The most necessary among them are : a good figure, sense of rhythm, grace of expression and of repose. This word 'repose' implies that the artist or dancer must not think of the outside world ; that he must avoid the temptation to attract his audience ; it also means that he must merge himself into his art, into what he is creating for the moment, in order to detach himself entirely from the sense of the outer world.

In the South Indian dance the different movements or poses of the hands suggest the inner meaning of the drama and represent in visual form the language of dance. The symbolical name given to these movements is 'Mudra'. The Southern dance, which is probably the most ancient, takes its themes from the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. One can witness this dancing still in the 'Katha-Kali' dance in Malabar. This art developed certain dramatic qualities, and expressed them in a shape that might be called cubic in conception, in which the movements of the arms and hands are at right angles, and not in the swelling and curving motions of other Indian dances.

These movements express great strength and offer a fascinating display of rhythm ; through them movements become as expressive as a spoken language. I have seen a South Indian dancer acting the part of a deer at the same time as he was representing the character of the hunter. When taking the part of the deer he had not only transformed his soul into that of a gazelle, but even his ears, his eyes, until every movement of his body, reflected the inner tragedy of the poor creature threatened by the hunter in the forest. The impersonation was really marvellous. The same thing was true of the Dance of Shiva. It carried the mind away far above the earth, to a supernatural world, and made us feel the dynamic force of creation in a way that is impossible to describe.

The dance of Manipur, on the north-east frontier of India, is perhaps of a still purer character than the other schools of dancing, and seems to be absolutely devoid of any foreign influence. This dance shows that lyrical quality which characterises the classical literature of Bengal and which was inspired by the Vaishnava religion. It always represents the life of the god Krishna.

The Manipuri people are worshippers of Krishna. Their dance is a token of adoration offered to their god, and the music which accompanies the dance is called 'Kirtana'. The dance describes the whole story of Krishna's life ; the love of the *gopis* for him, and all the symbolical meaning of that love which can best be compared to the 'Song of Songs' in the Old Testament. This kind of dance avoids all sensual movements in order not to spoil the idea of supreme love and of religious devotion. Therefore, the dancer dances under very severe restrictions : he must neither move his hips nor play with his eyes and eyebrows. This dance lacks the dramatic intensity of the South Indian. On the other hand, the Manipuri dances breathe

an extreme sensitiveness to all the beauty we find in Nature, when we enjoy the fragrance of a flower or delight in the silvery coolness of a moonlit night, in the gorgeous warmth of the sunset or in the pure depth of a morning sky. Like the swell of the waves, the curving and sinuous lines of the dancer's movements carry our spirit far away into the midst of Nature.

The third school of Indian dancing, which is entirely different from the other two, and which we call the Northern school, is a mixture of Hindu and Mahomedan dance. It was born in the time of Akbar, and took its inspiration from Persia. It is hybrid in origin and differs from all the other schools of Hindu dance, since it had its birth and growth in the atmosphere of the royal courts. The same may be said of the Mogul school of painting, which, mingled with the old fresco technique, gave birth to the new Indian style called the Kangra school. This kind of dance, therefore, never took root deep down in the consciousness of the Indian people : it remained the professional dance of the '*baijis*' or the *nautch* girls, who still draw their inspiration from the Persian '*gazal*' and the classical Indian music. This dance developed a high technique of sensuous movement, of pretty pose and of mimicry.

Besides these three schools of dancing, there are in India many kinds of folk-dances. These cannot be classified ; they have their origin amongst the people of the soil and give expression either to religious practices or to the celebration of natural events, like spring festivals, harvest festivals, and other similar occasions.

These folk-dances are not highly developed as an art, but are the spontaneous expression of particular feelings. If the other Indian dances could be likened to dramas or lyrics, these dances may be likened to popular ballads.

At our Dance School at Santiniketan we have been trying to revive all the indigenous forms of dancing which were seriously in danger of dying out for want of patronage.

Our first interest has been, therefore, to revive the interest in dancing in general and especially to study the technique of the different schools. But we cannot stop there. From our studies a new art is evolving ; a synthesis of all the forms handed down by tradition. In other words, our artists, musicians and dancers, in giving expression to their own feeling and emotion, are creating new forms on the foundation of the old. This work is still in its experimental stage, but there may be great possibilities in it.



A new feature of our effort lies in the fact that dancing has been, in India, confined either to the professional stage or hidden in remote parts of the country. At Santiniketan we have made dance a part of our education and an important subject in the art-life and training of our pupils. Not only are the students trained to adapt the classical rhythms and poses to newer themes and more complex emotions, but participation in the seasonal festivals, which are a regular feature of the life in Santiniketan, makes it possible for them to realise the basic relationship of dance to Nature's rhythm.

## THE GROWTH OF MODERN ANALYTICAL POETRY

Dr. Amiya Chakravarty

THE main characteristics of the modern analytical poetry as beginning with the 'nineties, are ( a ) a peculiarly self-conscious attitude towards Time, ( b ) a sense of correspondence and obscure relationships in things happening at the same time, ( c ) and a linking-up of purposiveness, in a scientific manner, with both the factors mentioned above.<sup>1</sup> In the following sections the poets illustrating the typical post-war consciousness will be discussed in connection with this attitude. Before taking up their works separately it would be necessary to make a brief survey of the background.

The preoccupation with Time and the peculiar historical sense of the modernist poets can be seen in the poetry of the 'nineties.<sup>2</sup> Hardy's consciousness of "the dark backward and abysm of Time", it

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1. The tendency to believe that because certain things are found to be closely related and are affected by each other, they must serve a certain common purpose—that is to say, must be bound by more than material laws—is deeply rooted in human nature. The analytical mind, through Science, is rapidly disclosing the inter-connections of things and events and supplying verifiable laws in place of dimly discerned affinities, etc., with the result that man's imagination has been powerfully stimulated by the evidence of a kind of fundamental logic of physical facts. In the mental sphere, too, psychology, a very new science, is trying to lay down general laws under which the mind works. All these results of analytical research yield valuable knowledge and insight into the workings of life but while they throw further light on the "how", the problems connected with the "why" cannot be solved by knowledge of the *process*. The modern mind confronted by the wonderful discoveries of laws and reciprocities is in danger of forgetting that such knowledge has to be supplemented by forms of realisation which lie beyond the reach of the finest analytical faculty.

2. Mr. I. M. Parsons in his introduction to "*The Progress of Poetry*" (subtitle—An Anthology of Verse from Hardy to the Present Day published by Chatto and Windus, 1936) diagnoses the modern attitude towards Time and other fundamental categories; he refers to Hardy as a forerunner of the new school of poets who are reflecting recent changes in thought. The following lines indicate the nature of his argument:—"Immortality—Eternity—Time: it is impossible to say which concept is most deeply rooted in the human consciousness. Moreover, our beliefs (or disbeliefs) in this field tend always to overlap each other . . . the modification of such central beliefs has influenced the poetry of our time . . . the steady accumulation of knowledge calculated to upset violently our sense of scale, particularly in respect of Time . . . (Part of the . . . change in our attitude to immortality . . . is to be found in our altered notions about Time) . . ."

Mr. Parsons quotes Hardy's "*Drummer Hodge*" to illustrate the last point, i. e. man's new attitude towards immortality.

has been seen, found a secure foundation in his realistic sense of history ;—he was very fortunate in thus being able to give a definite structure to his deeper intuitions—in *The Dynasts*, therefore, is seen a most powerful expression of the Time-consciousness which affected the poetry of the 'nineties. With his rationalising mind Hardy succeeded in using the Napoleonic wars to symbolise his original interpretation of the evolutionary process.

Yeats was fortunate enough to discover Ireland during his Cheshire Cheese days in London. He has recorded himself how, as a member of the Rhymers Club, he deliberately set out to find a tradition and a Past which would satisfy his need of *belonging* to a culture. He was exploring a genuine tradition, and his poetry was rooting itself in a tradition which linked up the Past and the Present in a continuity which was natural to his imagination. As in De La Mare's poetry, so in the works of Yeats, a constant awareness of Time seemed to be a part of the general make-up. Sometimes their imaginations run parallel: whether it is Yeats with his cry:—

"We who are old, old and gay  
Oh so old !  
Thousands of years, thousands of years,  
If all were told . . ."

or De La Mare singing how "very old are the woods" and telling us

"Through what wild centuries  
Roves back the rose",

they are giving expression to that sense of continuity in which woods and skies, nature and humanity, are woven together. Both of them reveal an attitude towards the Past which is not merely instinctive but self-conscious: they both evoke memories and try to reach to the sources of consciousness where it meets the Unconscious. Yeats went into the ancestry of his race and pursued a sense of continuous time through close study of folk lore, Irish myths and history ; while De La Mare extended his sense of conscious continuity by feeling his way through his own experience into the days of his childhood, which is another way of making the journey to the beginnings.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Both Yeats and De La Mare were influenced by a new attitude towards Time which, however, had not yet been subjected to the Einsteinian assault or that of the Bergsonian philosophy of flux. Croce's "istoria", Bergson's "duree", Einstein's "relativity" and the more recent quantum theories reveal the direction of the modern mind which is busy

The Imagists, apart from the attempt they made to show events in a new time-sequence, also tried to express their sense of history by representing the cultural products of the past in a continuous and living connection with the present. Without the imaginative power of the poets referred to above, they raked up the classics of different literatures and filled their verses with tags of quotation from Greek, Anglo-Saxon, Latin, Provencal, and other sources, in a self-conscious attempt to link themselves with history. They roamed in Egyptian archaeology, reached out for the most ancient branches of Fraser's "Golden Bough", busied themselves with Japanese and Chinese poetry,

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revaluating the fundamental categories of thought: but the process which led up to this stage, was already evident in the thought of the 'nineties faced by archaeological discoveries, geological Time, and astronomical calculations. The impact of new knowledge obviously resulted in considerable confusion in the minds of young intellectuals though their imagination was profoundly stirred and struggled with new conceptions. Pound's Cantos of 'continuous time' and Joyce's "stream of consciousness" novels produced during the "Imagist period," were typical products of an obsession with Time and Space. speaking of Pound's Cantos, Yeats remarks, "Mr. Wyndham Lewis, whose criticism sounds true to a man of my generation, attacks this art in *Time and Western Man*. If we reject, he argues, the forms and categories of the intellect there is nothing left but sensation, 'eternal flux' " (p. 2, "*A Packet for Ezra Pound*", by W. B. Yeats, Cuala Press, 1909 ).

Mr. Wyndham Lewis in the book referred to by Yeats quotes some sentences from Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*. "So timeless seemed the grey warm air, so fluid and impersonal his own mood, that all ages were as one to him. . . " etc., and remarks, (p. 128, *Time & Western Man*, by Wyndham Lewis, Chatto & Windus, 1927 ) " . . . So we arrive at the concrete illustrations of that strange fact already noted—that an intense preoccupation with *time* or 'duration' ( the psychological aspect of time that is ) is wedded to the theory of 'timelessness.' It is, as it were, in its innate confusion in the heart of the reality, the substance and original of that peculiar paradox—that so long as *time* is the capital truth of your world it matters very little if you deny time's existence, like the Einsteinian, or say there is nothing else at all, like Bergson, or whether space-time ( with the accent on the *time* ) is your god, like Alexander. For all practical purposes you are committed to the same world-view."

Without entering into Metaphysics, it may be said that Wyndham Lewis is sound if he asserts that certain basic assumptions, or categories, are integral to thought: that a mere attempt to deny them will not be helpful in literature, or Art—to take but that aspect of human activity. As he remarks ( p. 129 ), "What I am concerned with . . . first of all, is not whether the great *time-philosophy* that overshadows all contemporary thought is viable as a system of abstract truth, but if in its application it helps or destroys our human arts."

The destructive effect was evident enough in the chaotic experiments in Art, music and literature made in the years closely connected with the War: but that there was all along a germ of creative effort behind it is the opinion upheld in these pages; and an attempt has been made here to trace the more fundamental aspect of this ferment of ideas and experimentation as revealed in modern poetry from the 'nineties up to this day.

in order to compose a continuous tradition. They had not the realistic sense of Hardy which allowed him to sift his materials, and prevented him from being swamped by facts and fiction showered pell-mell from the different Pasts and Presents of mankind. Hardy, with his logical imagination, was able to formulate a philosophy of Time and he could express it through concrete historical events; his range also exceeded that of the Celtic revivalists, the Symbolists, and of the distracted Imagists: it is in the background of Hardy's attempt that all these different movements seem to yield a recognisable coherence.

Symbolists like Yeats had also a rising self-consciousness of the *simultaneity of events* happening at a particular time.<sup>1</sup> It has been seen how Hardy was constantly trying in the *Dynasts* to show his sense of correspondences, by depicting events of war and of peace, happening in distant places, as parts of "one compacted whole." This sense of relationship which tries to hold the entire Present as a continuity was, of course, always there in the mystically disposed mind. Reference has been made to the sense of correspondence and continuity to be found in the poetry of the Metaphysicals.<sup>2</sup> In Blake this sense assumes a more self-conscious form. He seems to have been haunted by this feeling of the relatedness of things happening separately at the same time, repeatedly he stresses this sense of relationship in a challenging manner. And he also reveals the third aspect of the modern analytical imagination mentioned above. It is the sense of some purposiveness and Will imposed by ideas of conti-

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1. Mr. Desmond MacCarthy in a recent book-review refers to "this modern tendency to *connect*"; a tendency which is innate in human nature but which, perhaps, shows itself more actively when scientific discoveries and rapid extension of knowledge make a heavy demand on our logical imagination.

2. Some quotations may be given here; Cowley speaks of the unconscious continuity which was there in Nature before Man arrived on the scene: "At first a various unform'd *Hint* we find",—

"Such was *God's Poem*, this *World's new Essay*  
So wild and rude in its first draught it lay:  
Th' ungovern'd parts no *Correspondence* knew  
An *Artless* war from thwarting *Motions* grew. . . ."

In spite of a certain mystification produced by his theory of Numbers, Cowley was here trying to express the idea that with the advent of the human mind a new continuity was established; rhythm, number, links between the past and the present were supplied giving the "Figures" the "measured *Dance of All*". And, therefore, according to him, Man in himself, is not only the "*full Abridgment of the World*," but "*the bond of all before*." (*Davidicis*, Book I.).

nuous 'Time and of correspondence which scientific research has produced. Blake hints at some Will-element which operates as the emerging factor in Hardy's drama, in a curious manner of his own. A woman condemned to sin affects somehow the full blossoming of perfect marital love : a caged robin disturbs the harmony of the heavens: a soldier armed with sword and gun brings wrong note into a summer sunlight: evil is never shown as happening disconnected with the texture of an inclusive whole. He also sees that goodness and beauty, appearing anywhere, must also change the balance and affect the totality. The free wild deer wandering about unfetters the human soul from its bondages of care.<sup>1</sup>

In Yeats the feeling of inter-connection<sup>2</sup> is more self-conscious and involves a more direct sense of responsibility. All uncomely and broken things, worn out old survivals, a crying child, a creaking cart, wrong his image of the ideal. But he goes further. He says that the wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to be told and continues, that he hungers to build them anew. That the sense of Time, of continuity, and of the inter-dependence of things should challenge us is an idea which had thus arrived on the conscious plane in Yeats' poems. But in the poetry of the Symbolists, the combination of beauty with utility and the challenge which the analytical consciousness offers to the Will, was still felt as in a dream. In order to build the better life the poet would "sit on a green knoll apart": and yet the Symbolists, even in their mystic symbol, were impelled

1. c.f. Francis Thompson's lines -

"When to the new eyes of thee  
All things by immortal power,  
Near or far,  
Hiddenly  
To each other linkéd are,  
That thou canst not stir a flower  
Without troubling of a star" (*Mistress of Vision*).

This is great poetry: the idea of linkedness is here expressed as a general principle realised in moments of heightened consciousness, and not in a purposive sense.

2. Arising out of a growing knowledge of the intimate inter-dependence of things—an inter-dependence which Science is proving with the help of material (and mental) laws—there is also the realisation that events in our Universe happen under a Time-scale, in spite of their differences in rhythm, which gives a certain unity to the whole of existence. Constant realisation of such a unity usually leads to a conception of moral law: the human mind feels itself to be directly involved when it discovers, amidst the diversities of circumstance, some principle of unity as if waiting for his recognition, and depending on him for its more explicit emergence in life.

to make them utilitarian: to the "sick children of the world" Yeats offers Words as a remedy for their suffering. In order that the "ancient burden may depart" "whispering words" are given. There was this side in the Symbolist movement which has not been sufficiently recognised. The ivory tower atmosphere had become almost stifling for them and they were trying to give an answer to their Age, by offering, in their own way, something which would "disengage the ultimate essence, the soul, of whatever exists and can be realised by the consciousness."<sup>1</sup> They were trying to get near to Nature and in some direct manner to affect human society.<sup>2</sup> There was a deliberateness about this procedure of using Symbols which seems significant to-day. Yeats was trying to evoke "the great mind" and "the great memory" by Symbols.<sup>3</sup> Ezra Pound in his manifesto on Imagism made much mystery of "the image",<sup>4</sup> but it was obvious that he also connected it with some direct potency for changing the society with which he was at war. Immediately before the war, along with Wyndham Lewis, he published *Blast*, in which violent attacks were made on forms of art, of society, and on warfare which, to the Imagists, seemed incompatible with a controlled, purposive existence. They were, of course, entirely wrong in most of their denunciations,

1. p. 9, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, by Arthur Symons.

William Archer, writing in 1890 on the *Poets of the Younger Generation*, recognised creative orientation, not mere signs of decadence, amongst his younger contemporaries, including Yeats. He spoke of poetry being "potent enough to give the spirit of man a new elevation and a larger outlook upon nature and destiny" and traced the growth of realism and a keener social conscience in the poetry of the 'nineties.

2. "We are coming close to Nature," writes Symons, and explains that in spite of the feeling of "shrinking" from life, the Symbolists were coming nearer to it, and felt that by "dutiful waiting upon" symbols they could liberate humanity and literature (pp. 8, 9, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*).

3. *Essay on Magic* (1901: *Ideas of Good and Evil*).

4. In his first manifesto Mr. Pound kept the Image unrevealed. later on, in an Article on *A few don'ts by an Imagiste* (March, 1913, *Poetry*, Chicago), he referred to the psychological value of the Image (mentioning the psychologist Hart) in that, when duly represented, it would give a "sudden sense of liberation" and the "sense of sudden growth."

Apart from the metaphysical idea of representing the absolute reality, which lay behind the "Symbol" and the "Image" and later on in Mr. Eliot's "objective correlative",—these three doctrines share an attitude of protest—"revolt against exteriority" as Mr. Symons called it (p. 8, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*)—there was the further object of bringing some force to bear upon the mind, through the use of such methods as would change and transform existence.

but to their credit it must be said that their attack on futurists like Marinetti and his unsocial, dehumanised art was no less categorical.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Pound's imagism and criticism of society, which had occasionally some wit and brilliance, as in certain poems of the Mauberley series, became, however, so virulent that his purposiveness soon became a cloak for expressing his own subjective furies.<sup>2</sup> His Time sense and feeling for contemporary unities has led him in his recent *Cantos* into a nightmare in which fact and fiction, Past and Present, are jumbled together without any sense or purpose.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Yeats refers to the

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1. As to Signor Marinetti, now an Academician, a few quotations will explain the nature of his literary activities in London just before the War. His aesthetic doctrine not only ignored humanity but fed on its agonies :—

"In my poem, *Zang-Tumb Tuuum*," he says, "I dealt in a few words at liberty with the shooting of a Bulgarian traitor. . . I had noted several times, whilst spending some afternoons in the battery De Suni at Sidi-Messri, in October, 1911, how the geometric and mechanical splendour of a luminous aggressive flight, inflamed by the sun and by the quick firing, renders the spectacle of the human flesh mangled or dying nearly negligible."

(Article on "Geometrical and Mechanical Splendour of words at Liberty" in *New Age*, May 7th, 1914).

This was in 1914; his poetic impressions of "nearly negligible" events in a recent War which he went to visit, have yet to be translated, if they have already been given in vernacular to his nation.

2. Messrs. Pound and Lewis stopped short of the *Dadaist* death-campaign on literature and life which caused some stir among the people who, not content with reality, called themselves *Surrealists*. Comments are unnecessary on the following lines in which *Dada* principles are set out :

"abolition de la logique, danse des impuissants de la creation ; Dada ; de toute hierarchie et equation sociale installee objets. . . Dada ; abolition de la memoire ; Dada ; abolition de l'archeologie ; Dada ; abolition des prophetes ; Dada ; abolition du future. . ."

Mr. Gascoyne has recently attempted to disinter this cult long since dead. (In *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, 1935).

3. Mr. Glenn Hughes in his book on Imagism (*Imagism and the Imagists*, 1931, California & Oxford) tries to explain the *Cantos* but without success. He himself admits that the *Cantos* cannot be understood without a knowledge based on "not only a careful reading of all Pound's earlier poems but also his various prose works. It should include, in addition, an intensive study of the Latin poets, several years' research in European (particularly Italian) history, a reasonable knowledge of the Romanic languages, a grounding in the principles of musical compositions, and an expert understanding of the laws of prosody." (Similar equipment is needed, according to Mr. Eliot's admirers, including Mr. Williamson and Mr. Matthieson, for understanding *Wasteland* and other poems by the author).

Mr. Glenn Hughes, however, makes his satire more real by pointing out that in the case of Mr. Pound, none of the other qualifications will be enough for the reader without "a personal acquaintance with Pound himself, at least by correspondence" (p. 245). And yet Mr. Hughes questions—"It is possible that some day the *Cantos* will take their place beside the long poems of Virgil, Goethe, Milton, and Browning. . ."



obsession with Time and hatred of logical order from which Mr. Pound suffers.<sup>1</sup> The purposive element in the Imagist movement, therefore, defeated its own end. Mr. Pound still goes on championing the oppressed, attacking the social order, and proposing currency reforms, but his involved virulences only succeed in making his new *Cantos*, if possible, more chaotic than before.

Mr. Eliot, even though extravagantly praising his friends,<sup>2</sup> has himself managed to avoid the worst excesses. It will be seen in a later article how those elements of modern self-consciousness in poetry mentioned above have been continued and developed in Mr. Eliot's poetry. The whole process will be shown in direct relationship to the analytical tradition of Hardy to which they belong.

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1. "Even when the hundredth Canto is finished the structure finally disclosed," says Mr. Yeats, will reveal "no plot, no chronicle of events, no logic of discourse"—(p. 2, *A Packet for Ezra Pound*, by W. B. Yeats, the Cuala press, Dublin, 1929).

Mr. Ronald Bottrall in his explanatory comments on the first volume of Pound's *Cantos* writes, "His contemporary allusions are usually less tangled than his references to the past, and it is not difficult to extract Lindbergh, Levine, Ruth Elder, Hinchcliffe, and the Hon. Elsie Mackay from the remarkable passage on Atlantic flights in Canto XXVIII." What is not difficult for Mr. Bottrall may, however, be well beyond the resources of others.

As to Mr. Pound's associative logic, Mr. Bottrall himself confesses that "the spelling 'Kahn' for 'Khan' links Kubla with the family of bankers and the Morgan firm" and so on. In Canto IV there is apparently "a fusion of Provencal poets and Ovid; Guillaume de Cabestang parallels Itys and Pierre Vidal Actaeon." The word "parallels" covers many different processes of association, imagination, etc. Mr. Bottrall, however, is not uncritical, he remarks, for instance, "it would be ungracious if I did not admit that I owe more to Pound than to any other living poet. But the *Cantos* are as liable to be a snare as an aid, since young men of exotic reading and precious tastes may be expected to produce pastiches of the *Cantos* for years to come." (*Scrutiny*, Sept. 1933).

2. In his introduction to Pound's *Selected Poems*, and in *After Strange Gods*.

## MODERN (POST-WAR) HINDI POETRY\*

S. H. Vatsyayana

### The Mystics

MYSTICISM is a great faith but a most dangerous plaything. In talking of Mahadevi Varma, the poetess, as representing a definite trend in modern Hindi poetry, one is distressingly aware of many souls less deep who have been attracted by this dangerous toy and been swept off their feet—not into the ‘ecstasy of communion’ but into a maze of sweet emptiness, an illusion of infinity, a vague, hazy wistfulness in which they ‘lie back and sigh in masochistic enjoyment of melancholia’. Poets of this class, among whom the name of Ram Kumar Varma may be mentioned, seem to start with a preconceived notion of poetry with a capital P. To begin to try writing ‘emotional’ poetry because, “At first I was a votary of Imagination, but now emotion appears to me to be more attractive,” is to shut oneself to the real source from which poetry springs. One does not write imaginative poetry because of a logical conviction that imagination is man’s highest faculty, nor does one become a treasure house of emotion the moment he realises that emotion or passion is what distinguishes organic life from matter. One writes imaginative poetry just because he writes it, or emotional poetry just because, whether he will or no, he is gifted with an emotional apparatus.

Ramkumar Varma has experimented with verse forms. Some of his verse effects are admirable, but beyond that his poetry does not go. His poems are ‘charming’—their charm being confined to the prettiness or the extent of his conceits. If he had not played with the mystic feeling he would have been classed with the beauty-worshippers—a dilettante among dilettantes.

The mystic is a man of God. He has an endless quest—the quest of the Infinite,—yet the quest is endlessly providing its own satisfaction. In the very intensity of his desire for communion with the Infinite Lover, the mystic’s being disrupts its earthly shackles and becomes the Infinite that it seeks. The degree of communion is conditioned only by the degree of the intensity of the passion. That

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\* Continued from the previous issue.

is why the mystic sings of the joy of union in one moment, of the pain of separation in another, of imminent self-effacement, expectancy in a third, of a pang of reminiscence in a fourth. One moment he is the helpless child seeking the protection of the benevolent mother, the next moment it is the Infinite that plays in his lap like a little infant ; once in a while, perhaps, the Lover is the merciless master exacting his due.

The Lover, the Beloved, the Infinite of the mystic is really a projection of his or her own personality. This mystic 'object of desire' is sexless, because personality is sexless. Sex is only the garb, the channel of expression ; a mere circumstance of the ultimate Absolute which is set aside when passion transcends the limits of desire and becomes, like its object, sexless and absolute.

Mystic poetry, therefore, is true if it communicates to us this awareness of the Infinite emerging from the shackles of circumstance ; false if it does not. Mahadevi Varma's poetry is likely to lead the casual reader to the conclusion that, judged on this criterion at any rate, she is a true mystic. One can find her seeking to express the whole gamut of emotions to which we expect the mystic to be subject. Taking examples, we first find the soul seeking solace—the figure employed is the child longing for the mother's affectionate lap:

O beautiful one with the cloud-black hair,  
Take it in your generous lap  
And clothe it with your soft tresses—  
Smilingly bend and print a cool kiss  
On its delicate brow ;  
Lull it to peace with your caresses.  
For the World-Child is so sad.

As the need becomes more intense, the figure changes. It is now the eager bride, all expectation:

Spring has blossomed in me—  
My body thrills with the ecstasy of his coming.  
Every moment comes like a messenger half-recognised ;  
Will I not hear now the Beloved's flute  
Piping the song of Spring?

And from somewhere afar comes the call:

Today the distant throb of strings plucked by someone's hand  
Calls me breathlessly beyond the veil of the storm.

A step further and the figure changes again:

I am thy lute, I also am thy song.

Then gradually into mere expectancy is woven a thread of consciousness—the approach of the Infinite:

Eyes are all ears, and ears all eyes today.  
I am lost in a strange maze;  
Every fibre of my being throbs with a heart new-found;  
Is it that the Beloved is coming?

And a step further:

You are within me, Beloved, what more need I know?  
You are the pattern, I the line,  
You are the tune, I the low note.  
You are the infinite, I the illusion of finiteness—  
In this dance of the body and its shadow,  
O mysterious One,  
Who is the lover and who the beloved?

Then it is that the being disrupts its bonds, and expresses its potentiality of becoming the Infinite:

Nurtured amongst limits, I have played with the Limitless,  
I am a riddle too.

And simultaneously desire is sublimated to embrace all forms of existence, all creation which is but an emergence of the same Infinite which the mystic invokes within himself:

Thus say the stars, 'We but reflect his glory.'  
Thus the clouds, 'We are the shadow of his compassion.'

The moment of communion itself is undescribed ; it is undescrivable. Upto a moment one can trace an accumulation, a gathering up of energy, and then beyond we see the ebb. This is as it should be. Poetry is really an epitaph on emotion, a feverish attempt to capture a perishing moment—a tomb within a crystal. The moment of experience can only be silent—the flow comes just after.

Thus superficially. To the more careful reader a fundamental lack is soon apparent. His suspicion is roused by the almost too finely chiselled exquisiteness of the verse, which one does not expect of the true mystic. If communion were real, the mystic would supersede the poet, expression would falter, and perhaps fail completely for a moment. That is why mediaeval mystics had that rugged fire, that ascetic pride, and often that surrender which was almost brutal in its directness and grotesque in its abject simplicity. Nowhere in Mahadevi Varma's poetry do we find evidence of that. In her earlier poems, no doubt, we find occasional glimpses of a more spontaneous and often erratic expression

of mystic emotion and, now and then, outbursts of faith, pride or surrender ; but it is totally absent in subsequent work.

Nor do we even find the restlessness of that philosophical ( or metaphysical if you prefer it ) attitude which often made Kabir's verses so dull but nonetheless justified his title of mystic. Mahadevi Varma always remains a conscientious artist, and her poetry, with its beautiful musical cadences, remains graceful, polished, urbane—with a fine undercurrent of monotony.

Yet as a poet Mahadevi Varma holds her place both in critical and in popular esteem. She has successfully expressed the heart-cravings of the Indian of today. That also explains why, side by side with the fatalist Bachchan, she forms model for the countless mushroom poets who are imitating them in style, diction and verse forms with ever increasing dexterity.

### The Pagans

To represent the pagan element we have selected Balkrishna Sharma, known by his pen-name, Navin. He is a true romantic, even to the 'fatal woman' fixation, which in England found such beautiful expression in Keat's ballad *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* or in Swinburne's *Dolores* and in various other poems.

The mention of Swinburne here is intentional. Navin has many of the qualities of that fine pagan, as well as several of his failings. Like Swinburne, Navin is often a slave to words, or rather to the sound of words, though his dexterity in their manipulation is not half as great as Swinburne's. Of the qualities of great poets—technique, intense imagination, and passion—Navin has the last in great measure. His work is often impromptu, sacrificing subtlety to freshness and vigour. Sometimes one even notices a slight pose—a desire to impress as a lover of daring, freedom and revolt. Often he uses little known words and phrases—either 'learned' ones from Sanskrit or crude and meaty ones from local or rustic dialects.

And yet in the modern morass of agnosticism, cynicism, passive melancholy and pessimism, his is a welcome voice—the voice of heart-whole, healthy youth, full-blooded, militant, impatient of obstacles, passionate in self-abandon. His उत्सासमय फनकपन is exhilarating.

A special quality in Navin's poetry is his almost provocative emphasis on the physical. He protests against too much spiritual-

isation, etherialisation of love. His beloved woman, his fatal woman, is not a splendid vision, an attenuated ghost ; she is tangibly real ; strong and robust and almost a pagan herself :

Beloved, come today in the courtyard of my heart to play :  
 Fill it with the anguish of vision :  
 Here in a corner stands my timid yearning *to see*  
 Here throbs a frenzied desire *to touch*,  
 O obstinate one, whence this delay in coming ?  
 Come into the temple of my heart with a queenly gait.  
 O my beloved. . .

A comparison of this with the following, chosen at random from Pant, is revealing of both poets :

My frail-bodied love.  
 Merged in the soft blue of the sky,  
 Mute, alone, ever fresh,  
 O form of forms, ever formless.  
 Unrealised like an *apsara* !

But Navin's provocativeness is no mere reaction, an outburst of repressed desire ; it is ebullition, the effervescence of natural virility. He is not an ascetic gone astray, he is a pagan. Life and youth, youth and life, that is the burden of his song. His breathtaking robustness saves him from being called naive in our too sophisticated age.

Bound at last in my arms, you queen of all bonds.  
 Your proud disdain has thawed into sweet graciousness !  
 O my beautiful flower, whom I hold in my iron grasp.  
 See, my heart is welling up anew.  
 The burning breath of passion sweeps me off my feet,  
 As you abandon yourself to my importunate desire !

(बन्धनो की स्वामिनी, by the way, is a good equivalent for 'Fatal Woman'.)

Now and then, in a short moment of fatigue, he pauses to ask a question or two :

Life's desires, eagernesses, anxieties.  
 The quenchless yearning for a glimpse  
 Must they all perish ?  
 A few days, a few months, a few years  
 Is the Life-force bottled up in this little flask of time ?

or is filled with doubt when the flame burns low :

My earthen lamp burns low, my beloved,  
 Perhaps I must lose this last treasure  
 also on the road ;

but this is a transitory feeling ; his concern is more with a different question :

In this short life-moment, how many embraces may there be?

And his confidence provides an answer :

Why blame the courtyard for being narrow?

The touch of your soft feet will make it vast :\*

### The Fatalists

The most significant poet of this school is Harivansh Rai Bachchan. Bachchan's attitude towards society and existence in general is one of denial. He does not protest. There is no combativeness in him ; his is the voice of the solitary individual broken on the wheel of circumstance, a voice of frustration calling in despair :

In this whirling maze the world will end :

What victory shall I celebrate,

what defeat bemoan ?

But in two more days I shall be emancipated—

'Neath a sheet I shall lie in undisturbed,  
peace!

He is blinded and perplexed :

The chariot of my life goes forth in all directions,

Only to retreat and strive again :

It knows not whither lies the goal.

He seeks escape but even that is denied him : he is honest enough to see that the ostrich does not escape the sandstorm. He complains and complains against the bondage of fate but beyond this indolent pessimism he does not go. He has no positive philosophy. When asked what to do, he has only Bazarov's answer, "Do ? Of course we must submit !"

In more recent work, however, there are hopeful signs. There is growing depth and increasing confidence, and the inertia which hopelessness had created is gradually being brought under control. Bachchan has a future if he is spared for it.

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\* In treating of Navin's poetry the writer has been compelled to rely on magazine cuttings, collected by him or lent by friends, as no collection of his poems has so far been published. It is always misleading to judge the status of a poet by the amount of his work thus collected. In view of this the writer will not complain if his remarks are received with caution or reserve.

### Conclusion

We are now in a position to make some general remarks in answer to the question that was formulated in the earlier part of the present paper. First of all, it is to be admitted that Hindi poetry today is not profound. There is a defect of passion, a lack of major achievements. No doubt the blame is not all on us of this generation ; we have been handed a corpse and have failed to bring it to life. But the fact remains that we have not unified our culture nor been able to grasp its oneness. Besides this, our writers have been cut off from the people. The real *rasa* of all great writing is the blood of the people, but even our best writers have held back from them, afraid lest too close an approach should blunt what they have learned to regard as culture—the fineries and delicate insincerities of an artificial social system. Perhaps this itself has its own causes. India is a country of queer contrasts : the poor are extremely poor, the rich are atrociously rich. The result is a wide gulf between them, made more acute by the rich wishing to gain prestige by contact with those who are the rulers today, and, therefore, by pragmatic law, our superiors.

It is significant that since the awakening of political consciousness, that is, during the period under review in the present paper, so many writers have marched towards sexual investigation. It cannot be said that this is explained by the age of transition, because it is a movement of demoralisation and degeneration. It can be understood only when we keep in mind the fact that the growth of a new system necessarily implies decay of the old. The general political aimlessness, directly resulting from a lack of courage, has a regressive effect on the poets from which they seek to escape by various routes, the easiest of which is along the path of morbid sexual questioning.

We are, however, alive to all our dangers. Indeed, the danger now is of a shift too far in the other direction—the use of hothouse methods for the rapid production of so-called mass literature and of popular contacts. In the present time a great many writers are trying to produce what they regard as progressive literature but what is in reality merely weak and mushy sentimentalism.

Being alive to the danger, we are up in arms against it, and are conscious of the great possibilities latent in Hindi language and literature. For Hindi has life, it has vitality, it has passion, and more than all these it has faith. These are the ingredients of which world literatures are made. Hindi is big with promise. I have no hesitation in ending on a note of prophesy.



## MAHATMA GANDHI\*

Rabindranath Tagore

THE geographical entity that is India appears from the earliest times to have roused in its people the desire to realise the unity comprised within its natural boundaries. In the Mahabharata we find the bringing together of its traditional memories scattered over different times and places ; and, in the institution of systematic pilgrimages to the various sacred places dotted over its entire expanse, we discern the process of capturing a complete picture of its physical features within the net of a common devotion.

The old way had its merits. What was received naturally and directly penetrated deeper ; and the arduous perambulation through the several centres of beauty and interest left an indelible impression.

From its place at the core of the Mahabharata the Gita illuminated the synthesis thus achieved. From one point of view it may seem that the delivery of this philosophical discourse standing on the brink of the Kurukshetra catastrophe, is out of place ; whence it has come to be regarded as an interpolation. But, even so, the genius who later on placed it there, knew that such clarifying of fundamental issues at the heart of epic grandeur, was necessary for the mind of India in order to gain a true vision of its essential wholeness, within and without.

And thus the reading of the Mahabharata was prescribed as a religious exercise for the people, not only because of the spiritual experiences it embodies, but also as a means of realising their own historical unity ; and it was supplemented by the system of regular pilgrimages as affording intimate geographical contact with the country as a whole. So much for the plan of the sages of old.

When the Aryans, coming in through the western gate of India, first founded their colonies in the land of the five rivers and thence, overpassing the Vindhya range, gradually spread over the rest of the country, the whole of it, including adjoining provinces such as Gandhara, came under one and the same civilisation. One characteristic of this sameness was the recognition and acceptance of existing differences which, as it happened, led to their eventual perpetuation. But, though not tending to organic union, the coherence of the different

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\* Authorised translation by Surendranath Tagore of the poet's speech, delivered to the students at Santiniketan, in celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday. Corrected and revised by the Author.

elements was left undisturbed so long as a common consciousness of geographical solidarity remained vivid and unbroken by outside interference.

Then, through that same western gate, a succession of aggressors poured in with alien cultures, and therewith dawned the discovery that all this time we had merely been living together, but had not become *one*. The resulting weakness led to repeated floods of conquest, of the older people by neighbouring hordes, and of the latter, in turn, by distant exploiters from over the seas, none of them encountering any effective resistance to their advance.

In the disruption that ensued, internecine conflict became the order of the day, Indian contending against Indian for supremacy, or striving for ascendancy by temporary alliance with a foreign power. The history of India has since been, save for a brief interlude, one of suffering and progressive degradation, the depletion of its material resources bringing about mental and moral weakness; for poverty without ever results in poverty within. And it took us long centuries to realise that all this was due to the one original imperfection,—of our failure to achieve unity of the same order as the vastness of the country.

There were, of course, redeeming forces at work all along. Whether, if India had been spared aggression from without, the spirit of her culture would have evolved a deep and abiding unity of her people or not, certain it is that even in the darkest period of her history, when her culture and her freedom were suddenly invaded and trampled upon, India reacted in her old, slow and subtle manner. Faced with the virile challenge of Islam, she released a spirit of mysticism that incorporating the best in Islam turned the very challenge to a source of new strength. The wisdom of the mediaeval saints and mystics, both Hindu and Muslim, thus carried on the progress of the slow unifying influences which we noticed in the age of Mahabharata. But though these saintly souls strove to revive the reality of the ancient culture by spiritual *sadhanas*, unfortunately, so far as the generality of the people were concerned, this merely begot in them a hankering for other-worldly gains, leaving their destitution of body and mind in this world unremedied. Indeed, far from checking the wastage of their resources, this only aggravated it by what they poured into the bulging paunches of their religious exploiters.

Wandering amongst the teeming populace of India there are now an increasing number of mendicant ascetics who leave the world

around them to its penury and suffering, taking refuge in the aloofness of self-centred spiritual practices. I once had a few words with such a *sannyasin* in some village. "Why don't you," I asked him, "try to do something for these unfortunate villagers, afflicted with hunger, disease and wrong-doing?" He was both surprised and annoyed at my question. "What!" he exclaimed, "I, who have shaken off the toils of world-life for attaining pure bliss, am I again to entangle myself in the concerns of these bemused worldlings, labouring under their illusions?"

While India lay thus cramped and divided, betrayed by its own idealism, it was called upon to meet the greatest trial in her history—the challenge of Western imperialism. For the Aryans and the Muslims may have deprived a few Dravidian and Hindu dynasties of their rule in India, but they settled down among the people and their achievements became India's heritage. But here was a new impersonal empire, where the rulers were over us but not among us, who owned our land but could never belong to it. Never was India exposed to such relentless exploitation and subjected to such disintegration. The organic unity of Hindu culture was breaking down under western influences, revealing the terrible cancer of untouchability. The Hindus and Muslims, despairing of their national good, began to quarrel among each other for scraps of patronage judiciously thrown out by the rulers. So disintegrated and demoralised were our people that many wondered if India could ever rise again by the genius of her own people,—until there came on the scene a truly great soul, a great leader of men, in line with the tradition of the great sages of old, whom we are today assembled to honour—Mahatma Gandhi. Today no one need despair of the future of this country, for the unconquerable spirit that creates has already been released. Mahatma Gandhi has shown us a way which, if we follow, we shall not only save ourselves but may help other peoples also to save themselves.

He who has come to us to-day is above all distinguished by his freedom from any bias of personal or national selfishness. For the selfishness of the Nation can be a grandly magnified form of that same vice: the viciousness is there all the same. The standard of conduct followed by the class called politicians is not one of high ideals. They reckon nothing of uttering falsehoods, they have no compunction in vitally hurting other peoples for the aggrandisement of their own. So we see in the West the spectacle of its nationals, on the one hand, freely

giving up their lives for their country and, on the other, assisting it in all kinds of criminal activity,—so much so, that serious doubts have arisen how much longer this European civilisation will survive : the very thing they call patriotism bids fair to make an end of it. And, when the end comes, they will not meet it passively as our countrymen might have done, but to the accompaniment of all the horrors of a catastrophic upheaval.

Politicians plume themselves on being practical and do not hesitate to ally themselves with the forces of evil if they think that evil will accomplish their end. But tactics of this kind will not pass the audit of the Dispenser of our fortunes ; so while we may admire their cleverness, we cannot revere them. Our reverence goes out to the Mahatma whose striving has ever been for Truth ; who, to the great good fortune of our country at this time of its entry into the New Age, has never, for the sake of immediate results, advised or condoned any departure from the standard of universal morality.

He has shown the way how, without wholesale massacre, freedom may be won. There are doubtless but few amongst us who can rid our minds of a reliance on violence—who can really believe that victory may be ours without recourse to it. For even in the *Mahabharata*, not to speak of the “civilised” warfare of the West, we find even *Dharma-yudda* to be full of violence and cruelty. Now, for the first time perhaps, it has been declared that it is for us to yield up life, not to kill, and yet we shall win ! A glorious message, indeed, not a counsel of strategy, not a means to a merely political end. In the course of unrighteous battle death means extinction ; in the non-violent battle of righteousness something remains over,—after defeat victory, after death immortality. The Mahatma who has realised this in his own life, compels our belief in this truth.

As before, the genius of India has taken from her aggressors the most spiritually significant principle of their culture and fashioned of it a new message of hope for mankind. There is in Christianity the great doctrine that God became man in order to save humanity by taking the burden of its sin and suffering on Himself, here in this very world, not waiting for the next. That the starving must be fed, the ragged clad, has been emphasised by Christianity as no other religion has done. Charity, benevolence, and the like, no doubt have an important place in the religions of our country as well, but there they are in practice circumscribed within much narrower limits, and are only partially inspired by love of man. And to our great good fortune,

Gandhiji was able to receive this teaching of Christ in a living way. It was fortunate that he had not to learn of Christianity through professional missionaries, but should have found in Tolstoy a teacher who had realised the value of non-violence through the multifarious experiences of his own life's struggles. For it was this great gift from Europe that our country had all along been awaiting.

In the middle ages also we had received gifts from Muslim sources. Dadu, Kabir and other saints had proclaimed that purity and liberation are not for being hoarded up in any temple, but are wealth to which all humanity is entitled. We should have no hesitation in admitting freely that this message was inspired by contact with Islam. The best of men always accept the best of teaching, whenever and wherever it may be found, in religion, moral culture, or in the lives of individuals. But the middle ages are past, and we have stepped into a New Age. And now the best of men, Mahatma Gandhi, has come to us with this best of the gifts from the West.

But though Christ declared that the meek shall inherit the earth, Christians now aver that victory is to the strong, the aggressive. And no wonder. For the doctrine seemed on the face of it absurd and contrary to the principles of Natural History as interpreted by Western scientists. It needed another prophet to vindicate the truth of this paradox and interpret "meekness" as the positive force of love and righteousness, as Satyagraha. This "meekness" is not submission, or mere passive endurance of wrong or injustice : such submission would be cowardly and would imply co-operation, even though involuntary, with the power of tyranny. But Gandhiji has made of this "meekness" or *ahimsa*, the highest form of bravery, a perpetual challenge to the insolence of the strong.

It is difficult to say which of these contrary principles will eventually prevail. For arduous indeed is the quest of Righteousness while we are beset with the battling forces of evil around and within us. But whether any one of us is or is not capable of rising to the heights of *ahimsa*,—accept it, believe in it, we must : for have we not before us a man who, in the very thick of this modern age, by his own life and example, holds aloft this standard for us to follow? And while we pursue the path, with such slow steps as we may, the Mahatma's message will gradually become real for us. This day, therefore, is a memorable day, and on every return of it, year after year, for many a long year, and more and more vividly as the years go by, must we continue to remember his message.

## THE GANDHIAN WAY

J. B. Kripalani\*

I WAS asked to write on "Gandhism", but I preferred the title, "Gandhi's way of looking at social and political problems," or shortly, "The Gandhian Way". For I believe there is as yet nothing like Gandhism. All "isms" come into existence, not at the initiative of those in whose names they are preached and promulgated, but as the result of limitations imposed upon the original ideas by the followers. Lacking the creative genius the followers systematise and organise. In so doing they make the original doctrines rigid, inelastic, one-sided and fanatical, depriving them of their original freshness and flexibility, which are the signs of youth. Moreover, Gandhi is no philosopher. He has created no system. He has from the beginning been a practical reformer. As such he deals with, and writes upon, problems as they arise. He is pre-eminently a man of action, and is rightly called a *Karmayogin*. It may not, therefore, be possible to find in his speeches, writings and action any logical or philosophical system. In this he is like the prophets and reformers of old. They too were faced with practical day-to-day problems. They had a way of solving these, without involving them in rigid systems. The main psychological principles were perhaps laid down but the details were to be filled in by each individual according to his peculiar circumstances and needs. Philosophy, system and rigidity was the work of lesser persons whose outlook on life and breadth of vision was narrow.

Gandhi never claims finality for his opinions. He styles his activities as search for, or experiments with, truth. These experiments are *being* made. For anybody to take or claim these experiments as the truth would be presumptuous. True, some of his followers, more zealous than wise, claim finality for his opinions; but he himself makes no such claims. He admits mistakes and tries to rectify them. Only for two of his cardinal principles—truth and non-violence—does he claim any sort of infallibility. For the rest he is as willing to learn as he is to teach what he considers to be the truth as he sees it. Even as regards the two cardinal principles, in their

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\* The author is better known as Acharya Kripalani and is the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress.—Ed.

application there is no rigidity. He freely admits that they may be applied differently in differing circumstances and situations. It is this attitude of his that often puzzles his followers and others and makes any positive forecast of how he will act under a particular set of circumstances rather difficult. Being a growing and evolving personality, there can be no finally fixed modes of thought and action for him. Those who have seen him at close quarters have observed this. It often comes out in his changing attitude to things and ideas. The undercurrent and the spirit guiding is the same, but the expression varies. This it is that gives him the freshness of youth and keeps him abreast of the times. While many of his young followers grow static and lose their vitality, he is ever dynamic, active and full of vigour. While others grow impatient of the youthful waywardness of the younger generation, he is ever understanding and patient, and examines new propositions with an open and comparatively unbiased mind. There is, therefore, as yet no such thing as Gandhism, but only a Gandhian way and outlook, which is neither rigid nor formal nor final. It merely indicates the direction without trying to fill in the details finally or for all times to come.

Gandhi's advent in the social and political field was due to the peculiar circumstances of our country. Like some of his better placed countrymen he went to England, qualified himself for the Bar and began his professional career to earn money and maintain himself and his family in ease and comfort. He was already a married man. In the course of his professional work he went to South Africa. Circumstances made him cast his lot with his countrymen there and fight their battles. Most of them were poor and illiterate. The few, who were rich, were there to make their pile. These lacked public spirit and political initiative. All needed guidance and leadership in a foreign land full of race-prejudice and economic jealousy. They suffered from various social and political disabilities, and were subject to various humiliating restrictions. Gandhi was drawn in the struggle of his countrymen to retain their vanishing rights in the land of their adoption. Once in, he brought to it all the weight of his sincerity, ability and intensity. He put his whole being in the cause and counted no cost. Soon he was the sole leader and guide of the Indians in South Africa. In that struggle he evolved a new strategy to redress group wrongs, and discovered the broad principles of Satyagraha. As usual, the practice of the doctrine came first and the name and the theory afterwards. In the struggle Gandhi discovered that

truth and non-violence were not only good conduct in personal and family relations but they were good and efficient weapons in settling inter-group relations. The doctrines were not new in human history. They had been practised and preached by several prophets of old. But no extensive effort had been made to apply them to political relations and disputes. To Gandhi belongs the credit of demonstrating on a large scale that the standards of moral and gentlemanly conduct that are good in individual relations are also good and efficient in inter-group relations. Also that truth and non-violence can be organised into external effective action making opposition difficult. He discovered that a fighter for a good cause, without indulging in violence, can, if he so chose, get his wrongs redressed, that in truth and non-violence he has better and more effective weapons against wrong and iniquity than the customary weapons of violence.

Gandhi applied among others a simple test to prove that truth and non-violence are at the basis of all successful activity. While truth does not need for its success the co-operation and support of untruth and violence, these latter in order to succeed always stand in need of the former. For any activity in life, however selfish and unsocial, must have its foundations in the keeping of faith with each other of those who have to engage in it. Commerce, for example, is a field where selfishness and greed have perhaps more free play than elsewhere. Yet in commerce no transaction ( or even fraud ) would be possible for any length of time if merchants did not keep faith with each other and if their word was not as good as a bond. Thieves and murderers have to keep faith with each other. Sometimes they have to keep this faith by sacrificing their individual advantage. No activity but must use as its basic principle some form, however limited, of truth. And so with non-violence. No extensive and organised violence would be possible if those engaged in it did not observe rules of non-violence within their own ranks. They cannot possibly carry on their fight with the enemy without this basic principle. If an army believed merely in violence, then before it could make use of it against the enemy it would annihilate itself.

Realising these two to be the basic principles of all organised life, Gandhi uses them in the field of politics, a field where so far as results go, fraud and violence have ever been thought to be more efficient. Gandhi, however, does not rely merely on the efficacy of the abstract principles, leaving the working of the results in the hands of higher powers. He does not believe merely in the conversion of the



heart of the opponent, though he desires that too. But above all he tries to organise and strengthen those suffering from iniquity and injustice. So that they may be properly organised, he wants them to shed all iniquity, all division, all fear, all selfish and petty interests. Having so strengthened and organised themselves, he wants them to withdraw the help that they have been rendering to iniquity and tyranny. In short, he wants them to non-cooperate with the forces of evil.

Whatever may have been the case in the past, in the world as it is today, tyranny is made possible by the willing or unwilling, conscious or unconscious, free or forced, co-operation of those who are tyrannised over. If the latter refused all co-operation and were willing to suffer the consequences of such refusal, iniquity and injustice would find it hard to go on for long. This is seen in industrial disputes. Whenever labour has effectively withdrawn co-operation, the capitalists have invariably capitulated. Seeing the results in single isolated industrial disputes, labour today talks of general strikes for the redress of grievances and for political or revolutionary purposes. Now what is a strike externally but non-cooperation—Satyagraha? The inner spirit guiding an industrial dispute is different from that of Satyagraha as conceived by Gandhi, though it need not be, but the method of withdrawal of co-operation is common to both. If that withdrawal could yield tangible results in industrial disputes, why should there be scepticism about Satyagraha? Satyagraha is a strike plus something more. That something more makes for better morale among those carrying on the fight. It means greater loss of morale to the opponent. It also means greater sympathy from neutrals. The external weapons of withdrawal of co-operation are here helped and strengthened by more psychological and subtle influences. A Satyagrahi is a better non-cooperator or striker. His judgement is not clouded by passion, anger and hatred. He disarms his opponent. He gains more sympathy. He is also fortified with the belief that suffering voluntarily borne always makes for the advancement of the individual. But suppose that all these moral and psychological factors and forces working in his favour are taken away and one confines oneself merely to the external fact of withdrawal of co-operation, what is there mystical about the method that is being used more or less successfully for the last one hundred and fifty years in industrial disputes and but for which there would be little talk today of general strikes, socialism or communism? Satyagraha is something mystic and spiritual only if the term stands

for something unknown, unknowable and unpractical. A general strike is something practical, concrete and comprehensible. Why should then Satyagraha be unintelligible? How easy it is for men to get entangled in phrases, words and names and thus create differences where there are no differences. Talk in the language of Gandhi, and in terms of Satyagraha, and a concrete, tangible struggle becomes mystic, spiritual, idealistic and consequently unreal. Talk in terms of general strike and straightway that very same thing becomes scientific, nay, it becomes a historical necessity.

Not only in this matter of Satyagraha does the modern mind miss the essence but also in Gandhi's theory of truth as applied to politics. Truth in inter-group and international relations is today considered to be the vital necessity of the world situation. If diplomacy continues to be what it was, there is today a very great danger of the whole machinery of modern civilisation falling to pieces. This was clearly understood by Dr. Woodrow Wilson and other very practical politicians in the last war. Now what is truth in politics but what has been called and applauded as open diplomacy? When Dr. Wilson kept this principle before the nations of the world and when he advised the formation of a League of Nations on this principle, nobody thought him to be a mystic, a spiritualist or an unpractical politician. When Russia and Socialism and Communism talk of open diplomacy, the modern mind is not scandalised. Is it because these do not mean the thing seriously? But when Gandhi talks of truth in political relations all the learned and the wise raise their hands in horror and cry, it is not possible, human nature being what it is and politics being what they are and what they always have been. As usual fanaticism fights about words. We have the illustration of this in religion. If the Christian says the Divine Spirit descended in the form of a dove, it is rational. But if the Hindu says that it descended in the higher form of man, it is all oriental superstition. If the Hindu reverences an idol it is again all superstition, but if a book or scripture is wrapped in hundreds of folds and kissed everytime that it is touched or opened, it is rational. If one talks of open diplomacy one is a practical politician, but if one talks of truth in politics, straightway one becomes a mystic, a saint and therefore unpractical as a politician. Talk in terms of general strikes and you are scientific, but talk of Satyagraha and you at once become unscientific and reactionary.

To continue, Gandhi found and evolved his method of fight and his strategy in South Africa. He used it there with some effect. He

has used the same weapon of Satyagraha here on several occasions, in Champaran and in the three fights of non-cooperation. He has in all these instances, even when he has not attained his or the national objective, achieved substantial success. Even an armed insurrection does not succeed in the first rush or with one effort. In the prolonged war in defense of a cause there are many battles, skirmishes and sieges, reverses and successes. If a force succeeds in the minor engagements it must consider itself successful and may reasonably hope in course of time to achieve complete victory and reach its objective. Even if there is failure in minor engagements but if the army marches on uninterrupted and its morale remains undiminished and its power of resistance grows and if progressively it is able to give a better and better account of itself, then, even though the objective is not achieved, the method employed must be considered good. Now few can deny that with every struggle that the nation has waged under Gandhi, its progress has been forward, and its power of resistance has increased. Only prejudice can deny that the net result of these Satyagraha fights has been an advancement of the nation in terms of strength, sacrifice, organisation, fearlessness and morale. Each struggle has brought greater hardship and suffering due to increased repression, but every time the response and the resistance has been greater. In 1930 the nation gave a better account of itself than in 1920-21. In 1932-33 the nation gave a still better account of itself. The outward result of the fight did not appear to be as favourable as in 1930, but the nation had a more prolonged fight and it resisted a greater shock. Repression was more ruthless and more thorough and though the nation had to suspend the fight through sheer weight of the enemy and consequent exhaustion, its inherent strength was much greater than in 1930. This was soon witnessed in the solid victory of the nation at the polls in the Assembly elections. The nation was not prepared to prolong its suffering at the time by persisting in Satyagraha but its heart was sound and its morale intact. So whatever may have been the immediate result of the three fights, a defeat, a truce and a defeat again, the nation has been steadily advancing to its goal. After all the final goal can be reached but once. Even a series of successes may not reach us to the final goal ; but, whether apparent success or failure, whatever leads us to greater strength must be considered essentially a success, as it brings us nearer to the final goal.

Now let us see if the nation could have so advanced by the pre-Satyagraha methods. Except for those who are wedded to

constitutional methods under all conceivable circumstances, every unbiased observer will admit that the method of Satyagraha is a definite improvement upon the method of constitutional agitation, of petition, prayer and protest that marked the Congress politics before the advent of Gandhi. The critics may, however, say that though this method was an advance on the old and though it did take the nation a little farther, its function is now over and its mission complete. It can serve us no more. If so, then it is for such critic to suggest or advise a better and more efficacious method. Has any critic so far kept before us any new method of organised resistance? On the contrary, it is obvious that all thoughtful people, even those belonging to the so-called advanced groups, believe that under the circumstances in which the world, and particularly India, is placed today the method of fight will have to be non-violent. With the present weapons of war and destruction the monopoly of states and governments even a firearm is no better than a lathi or bow and arrow of old. In an age of aerial and chemical warfare, the instruments of which are in the hands of governments, even an armed people would find a physical conflict with the state a hopeless task. How much more an unarmed nation like India? Moreover, it is not possible to organise openly in a military sense. We can only organise ourselves by non-violent methods. And after all even in a physical fight the qualities that are of the utmost importance are moral, like organisation, discipline, unity, bravery and sacrifice. Satyagraha brings out these qualities pre-eminently. Whatever may give the final blow, non-violence or violence, for the time being the qualities that the nation has been progressively acquiring under Gandhi are worth cultivating and worth having. They can be cultivated most extensively by peaceful methods. It is quite possible to have a small secret revolutionary group having all these moral qualities. But the nation as a whole or any extensive portion thereof cannot get these qualities by secret methods. Therefore even for a final violent struggle these qualities that Satyagraha has developed in Indian character are good, for they are the basis of all fight, violent or non-violent. So if not for ever, at least for many years to come, the method of Satyagraha or strike is the only method open to us. It is not possible nor desirable for the practical reformer to look very far in the future. He goes wrong if he thinks only of today. He goes wrong again if he thinks in terms of very remote future. He must strike between the two extremes a workable mean. This workable mean is supplied by our non-violent fight of Satyagraha for Swaraj. So far

therefore as any revolutionary programme of fight for the capture of political power goes there is no party that has even remotely suggested any suitable substitute for the method of Satyagraha worked out and evolved by Gandhi.

In a revolutionary fight the actual struggle is as much of importance as periods when struggle is not possible, when owing to political repression or exhaustion the nation is not prepared for the risks and sufferings that actual fight involves. At such times the nation must be provided with some activity of a constructive and useful character. If this is not done the fighting ranks will be disorganised. The soldiers of Satyagraha must periodically retire to their camps. These must provide them with activities that would keep them fit and in good trim. Periods of comparative peace must be utilised also to strengthen the organisation. If all this is neglected, at the commencement of the new fight the nation will find itself disorganised and out of form. For such times of political depression and quiet, Gandhi has evolved what he calls his constructive programme. Khadi, Village Industry, Village Work, National Education, Harijan Work, Hindustani Prachar are some of the activities which he has organised and institutionalised. The activities are good in themselves and they keep the army of workers engaged. The nation too by participating and helping in the activities learns habits of public work and responsibility. This is not all. When civil disobedience is suspended, local fights with the government on particular issues also go on. Bardoli was one such fight.

These constructive and partial activities also rope in people who either do not believe in direct political action or are more interested in social than in political work. Gandhi and his co-workers view these activities both from the social and the political view-point. While they are engaged in these activities they never forget that they are the soldiers primarily in the fight for freedom. Therefore to view and style these activities as mere narrow social reform or as old dame's work or reactionary is needlessly to stigmatise them. It is to confuse the issues. All activity that is not of a militant character would, if superficially and unsympathetically viewed, appear as reformatory and not revolutionary. But if the aim and the objective are not forgotten, these very same activities become both reformatory and revolutionary—reformatory in their immediate results and revolutionary in their ultimate effect on the fight whenever that may come. An army when it is not fighting and is in barracks does many things that appear to an

untrained mind to have no direct relation with actual war. They dig trenches that have to be filled in again. They organise long marches that lead nowhere, they shoot the bull's eye and their shots kill nobody. They organise mock fights. All these activities, if they are taboo because they do not appear to have any particular relation with actual war, would disorganise the army and would make it useless when the time of actual action approaches. Even revolutionary parties have their day-to-day reformatory programmes. They are not solely to be judged by these programmes. If they are, such judgments would not be just. The city proletariat has got to be organised. How can it be done? It can only be done by means of trade unions. Now no trade union, however revolutionary its object might be, can be organised on purely revolutionary basis. The basis must be the day-to-day needs and requirements of labour. These requirements have no relation to the revolutionary aim. For the time being the activities of labour unions will be concerned with a little reform here and a little reform there. They will be concerned with a little increase in the wages, a little diminution of hours of work and a little increase of social amenities. No trade union can ever be organised solely and purely on revolutionary basis. The peasant organisations will have also to function similarly. For day-to-day work they will be reformatory, while their objective will be revolutionary. To decry all reformatory work as anti-revolutionary and reactionary, is to miss the different facets of a revolutionary movement, which is to be carried on all fronts.

I have not yet seen any group or party that has kept any substitute programmes for those laid down by Gandhi and accepted by the Congress. I have heard a good deal of talk about some radical and revolutionary programmes but I have not seen them illustrated in practice.

Take one item of Gandhi's constructive programme, the production and sale of khadi. I have not yet heard what advice the revolutionary of the non-Gandhian type would give to the ordinary purchaser. He surely cannot recommend khadi, as that would be reactionary. Will he then recommend mill cloth? That he cannot do, for he would be asking the consumer to directly help those who daily and hourly exploit labour, while he has not the necessary political power to put a check upon their rapacity and avarice. Will he recommend foreign cloth? Apart from anything else such a recommendation would be psychologically harmful for the immediate political struggle. I have often heard it said that he would all the same re-

commend Indian mill cloth in the hope that as industrial life grew there will be an increase in the number of the city proletariat which is always good material for the revolution. If he could even ensure this, his argument may be allowed to pass. But whatever he may say or do, he cannot extend and energise Indian industry. Thanks to the policy of the foreign government, Indian industry is never allowed to go beyond certain narrow limits. Census reports show that it has not been able to keep pace with the growing population of India and that progressively more and more people have to fall back upon land. The proportion of industrial population to the whole population keeps diminishing.

The other argument advanced is that help to Indian industry gives us something on which we shall build our industrial life hereafter. This argument no more holds good. Russia has shown that after the capture of power a five or ten years' plan can industrialise a country completely. When we have the power, this antiquated and effete industry will render us precious little help in our future plans of industrial reconstruction. So to forego for the poor a sure advantage today for a doubtful advantage in the future will not be a wise policy. We may also profit by past experience. The Swadeshi movement of the anti-partition days came to grief because the nation relied upon mill-agents. They raised the price of cloth and defeated the object of the politicians. The politicians relied exclusively upon the goodwill and patriotism of the industrialists. The result was disastrous. If we are to benefit by Swadeshi and if we are not to put ourselves helplessly in the hands of an unpatriotic and shortsighted capitalism we must have other resources to fall back upon. These have been created by Gandhiji in his khadi and village industries movements. These movements also provide work for the leisure months of the peasants. In what way then are these activities reactionary? Some radical thinkers say that these activities by ameliorating the lot of the poor and by bettering their condition would take away their revolutionary zeal. If this is true of khadi it is true of every trade union activity including strikes. Even a strike is never undertaken for general revolutionary purposes, but for some concrete reformatory objective. The gymnastic that it provides for revolution is only a by-product.

So far as khadi and village industries go, Gandhi can give ample proof that he is wide awake. Nothing can be more revolutionary than the fixing of a minimum living wage and this without political power.

Yet Gandhi introduced this revolutionary measure in all organisations working under his advice and guidance. This he has done in spite of expert advice based upon commercial figures supplied by workers and organisers. He has ignored facts and proved his revolutionary vision and ardour. He had warning that whatever little of khadi had remained would be annihilated but he preferred the destruction of his pet scheme in favour of a distinctly just and revolutionary principle. His vision and faith have been justified. Khadi has not suffered much by the new experiments.

Take again industrial labour. There is one labour union guided and inspired by his ideas. In India today there is no union better organised and more financially stable than the Ahmedabad Mill Mazdoor Union. None has more real and paying membership. None has again more institutions attached to it in the shape of creches, day and night schools for children and adults, boarding houses, Harijan institutions, co-operative stores and the like.

Impatient as Gandhi is for Swaraj he lays out his plans on a vast scale and on permanent basis. Even when he talked in terms of Swaraj in one year he devised and organised his institutions on the basis of prolonged work. National Education, Khadi, Hindustani Prachar, Harijan Work could not have been completed in one year. For the schemes and the institutions were conceived in terms of many years. The immediate political objective was not attained but the institutions went on organising and perfecting themselves and thus keeping the embers of revolution alive. These are all pioneer institutions. They may fail, they may have to be scrapped ; newer, better and bigger schemes may have to be devised in the future ; but the gain to the nation and the advance that the nation has made through these institutions can only be belittled or neglected by a very superficial student of the national movement.

It is easy to denounce and criticise. But when the critics themselves settle down to work and organise they will find that their activities in terms of their world-vision of universal revolution are merely reformatory, concerned with day-to-day minor details that apparently bear no relation to the objective. Take a volunteer in a revolutionary movement who is assigned the task of pasting stamps on office envelopes. How is he to relate his this humble humdrum monotonous task to the coming revolution contemplated by his party ? He has to requisition to his aid a broader vision and some living faith. Thus only can he think that even his humble task is a necessary



contribution to the revolution. Gandhi has the vision and the faith to understand this underlying principle of all work. Like a religious man who sees his Paramatma in every Atma, Gandhi sees his god of Swaraj in every little reformatory activity that he undertakes or advises others to undertake. He may be in the front of the fight shaking the mane of the British lion, he may be perfecting the little Charkha or sweeping the narrow lanes of the little village at Shegaon, it is all for him the work for the revolution, work for his dream of Purna Swaraj in which the poor will come to their own. As he works in that faith he infects his followers and co-workers with like faith.

Thus Gandhi has evolved and kept before the nation his double programme, one for active and revolutionary periods when the tempo of political life is on the rise and the other for comparatively peaceful times, when the national life is sluggish and normal. No person or party has devised for these two necessary alternating periods better programmes. True, the programmes are conceived for independence, not for the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship or a peasants' and workers' republic. But his programme of work and even his Swaraj is conceived in terms and in the interest of the masses of India. Speaking at the Round Table Conference, he declared that the goal represented by the Indian National Congress was "complete freedom from alien yoke in every sense of the term, and this for the sake of the dumb millions. Every interest, therefore, that is hostile to these interests, must be revised or must subside if it is not capable of revision." It is quite possible that the interests of the masses may best be served by only a proletarian dictatorship. But as yet he does not think that such schemes would best serve the interest of the masses of India. In the meantime it is open to those who advocate a proletarian rule to devise their own double method and not only keep it in theory before the nation but demonstrate it in the working. Before we have such programmes in theory and practice, and more in practice than in theory, we may well be allowed to remain where we are. Gandhi did not invite people on the mere theory and ideology of truth and non-violence but along with it he kept programmes of work. His ideology may have been centuries ahead of the world-thought, yet he did not wait for the time when his ideology had permeated through the masses of India. He rather demonstrated the efficacy of his ideology by placing before the nation work conceived in terms of his ideology. He rightly thought that the best way even of preaching an ideology is to work it out in howso-

ever humble a fashion. Others who have similar ambitions had better follow in his footsteps if they are serious about their particular and peculiar ideologies. After all we were new to Gandhi's ideology and his practice. It required a great wrench with our past, with our habits of thought and action, with our values, to join him. We may be trusted to do likewise if better and more workable programmes are offered to us by any individual or group. After all Gandhi kept poverty and suffering before his followers. If they can get some tangible results with less suffering and less sacrifice they are not such fools as would allow such opportunity to pass by. Some of them have left their professions and their incomes and are engaged in khadi and village industries work. This work gives perhaps a couple of annas to the poor and provides the workers with activity when the actual Satyagraha fight is not going on. If anybody shows them a way of putting a rupee or more in the pockets of the poor and also shows them a surer and better way of fighting the foreign imperialism, they are not the ones who would reject such tempting offers. If they sacrificed what people think important in life—their professions and their incomes—for smaller things, they will not do less if higher and better things are placed before them. They have proved themselves apt pupils of the novel methods of Gandhi, methods that were never tried in history and for which there was no precedent. If more familiar and well tried and easier methods are placed before them they would surely welcome such. But frankly speaking they do not see their way clear. As soon as they see any light they shall join those other friends, from whom they differ now. In the meantime they should be allowed to work out their schemes unhampered. They in their turn are always prepared to allow other groups to work out their own schemes according to their own ideologies.

The question however rises : to whom shall the Congress machinery belong ? Here also the Gandhian way may be a guide to us. In his Champaran fight he was offered Congress help. He refused it. He said the Congress was a big and important organisation. It could not perform new and untried experiments. It could not risk its reputation for sanity and steadiness on an issue in which it may be involved unconsciously not knowing the full implications and the consequences. Gandhi asked only for moral support and no more. He wanted the Congress to follow its own path in accordance with the genius of its history and growth. In 1920 also he had already started Satyagraha on the Khilafat issue. He came to the Congress

with his proposals. He told the Congress that it would be good for the organisation to take up this particular question ; but if it chose not to take it up he would go ahead. He did not say that his plans would be put in effect only if they were accepted by the Congress. Once again in the days of the Swaraj Party, even though the vote was with him, he retired and allowed the Swarajists free field. So let all parties keep their plans before the Congress but if these plans are not accepted they must go and work them out themselves and capture the Congress by the conviction they carry by showing concrete results. These results need not mean any success of the plans but they should be such that they are an earnest of organisation, effort and final success. They should be such that sceptics may be enabled to see a few steps ahead. But if instead of field work in different directions the effort merely is to capture the machinery of the Congress from above, the successful party may soon find that it has killed the golden goose in its hasty anxiety to get as much out of it as is possible. After all Congress is not the government whose machinery, when captured, leads one automatically to power. Congress has no power except what is put in it by us, by our work in the country, our organisation, our sacrifices and suffering. Therefore any hasty capture of the Congress machinery from above will not benefit any party. True, the Congress has a mighty prestige but this can only be exploited by those who work, organise and are prepared to suffer and sacrifice, not by anybody else.

I have placed before the reader the double programme of Gandhi, his programme of direct action and his constructive activity. I have also indicated his attitude and his way of looking at the Congress machinery. By all these things we stand. We wait to see better substitutes for all the three methods and when we find them, I hope, following in the footsteps of Gandhi, who is ever willing to learn and is bound by no rigid and inflexible rules, we shall ever be found in the front rank of the fighters for the country's liberty. To that end, we hope, we have dedicated our lives and not to any particular doctrine or dogma.

## TO THE PAINTER\*

You maker of pictures, a ceaseless traveller  
among men and things,  
rounding them up in your net of vision  
and bringing them out in lines  
far above their social value and market price.

Yonder colony of the outcaste,  
its crowd of rustic roofs,  
and an empty field in the background  
scorched by the angry April sun  
are hurriedly passed by and never missed  
till your wayfaring lines spoke out, they are there,  
and we started up and said, indeed they are.

Those nameless tramps fading away every moment into shadows  
were rescued from their nothingness  
and compelled us to acknowledge  
a greater appeal of the real in them  
than is possessed by the rajahs  
who lavish money on their portraits of dubious worth  
for fools to gape at in wonder.

You ignored the mythological steed of paradise  
when your eyes were caught by a goat  
who is only noticed with our expostulation  
when straying on our brinjal plot.  
You brought out its own majesty of goatliness in your lines  
and our mind woke up into a surprise.  
The poor goat-seller remains ignorant of the fact  
that the picture does not represent  
the commonplace beast  
that is his own,  
but it is a discovery.

*Rabindranath Tagore*

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\* Translated by the Author from the original Bengali. This poem, written in June last, was inspired by certain sketches by the artist Nandalal Bose, one of which appears on the next page. The sketch of a goat referred to in the last stanza appeared in Vol. III, Part II of this Journal.—Ed.



*By* Nandalal Bose

## AMIR KHUSRU

### *The First National Poet of Modern India*

M. Ziauddin

WITH the establishment of the Moslems in India and the transfer of the capital from Ghazni to Delhi, which amounted to the independence of India from foreign Moslem control, Indian Moslems ceased to think themselves to be foreigners in the land and accepted India as their mother-country. Moslems of Persia and Arabia considered Indian Moslems as a separate class and termed them 'Hindi', that is Indians. Since then, that is, about seven hundred years or more, they have developed on independent lines, apart from the people of other Moslem countries, and have evolved a culture which has its special stamp and is known generally as Indo-Moslem. Leaving the Arabs apart who entered India through Sindh, the Turks and the Mongols who invaded from the North and finally spread all over India, had no special claim to any culture. They had accepted Islam only a few decades before and were in the process of being transformed into a society that had the Arabicised Persians as their model. Hence the importance that Persian language and literature received at their courts. The culture that these Turks, and later Mongols, brought into India was originally Perso-Turkish and not Perso-Arabian in its true form. This new development when implanted in India gave birth to a new culture which was Indo-Moslem. Within a few centuries nothing common remained between the Moslems of India and those of other countries except their religion, which too, has undergone a good deal of change in minor details.

No sooner the Moslems found their roots safe in the soil of India than they began a new course of life, a course of regeneration into a new world under a new sky. They loved India because it was their motherland and they defended her against all invaders, whether Moslem or non-Moslem. But, by their religion, their social laws and, for a long time, by their speech and dress they looked foreigners and were treated as such by their Hindu neighbours. Socially both the communities kept aloof from each other. The Moslems had the advantage of receiving converts to their fold. And it was this originally Hindu element which had accepted Islam that was most responsible for creating the new type of society. On the other hand,

the Hindu society, though it underwent no great racial change like the Moslems, altered slowly in general life and outlook as it came more and more in touch with the Moslems. With the co-operation of both the communities there came into being new literature, architecture, music, painting, dress and etiquette and a new language known today as Urdu—results of the synthesis of the foreign and the indigenous elements of cultures. But before this process could complete its course and make India culturally homogeneous, forces of disruption appeared that rendered India politically weak and let it finally pass into the hands of a few English traders.

In Amir Khusru we find the first poet who was a true representative of this new type of Indo-Moslem culture and whom we might rightly consider the first national poet of the new India. He was the first to voice the love and the great regard the Moslems of India had for their country. He sang of the greatness of India, of its beauty, of its unparalleled wisdom and its glorious arts.

As a poet he was the foremost creative artist of his age. He occupies an honoured position among the greatest poets of Persia—though he was a Turk by race and born in India ( Patyali, 1253 A. D. ). Considering his versatility and the comprehensiveness of his art he has no equal even in Persia. Other poets of Persia have been great in one or another form of poetry but Khusru was equally great in all the recognized branches of Persian poetry. What gives him an absolutely unique position among the poets of the Persian language are his accomplishments in music. The only poet with whom we might compare him is our modern poet Rabindranath Tagore. As we proceed we will find that there are more points of comparison between him and the poet Tagore than can be guessed at first sight. A contemporary writer, Ziauddin Barni, the author of *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, who was also a devoted friend of Amir Khusru, remarks that Khusru was an embodiment of harmony, an incomparable personality, the unrivalled genius of his age. Music is indeed the essence of his poetry as also of his personality.

We do not propose to review here Amir Khusru's poetry which is a subject by itself and requires separate treatment. It will suffice to say that Persian poets like Sa'di, Sa'ib and Jami had a very high opinion of him. It was believed possible for Sa'ib and Sa'di, to have come over to India to see him. Regarding his epic poem which he wrote in answer to Nizami, the greatest *masnavi* writer of Persia after Firdausi, there was a division of opinion. Some considered

Khusru to have scored over Nizami. But Khusru's greatest achievement was the *ghazal*, in which he had surely improved upon the model set by Sa'di. He was the first to introduce narrative description of objects of Nature or art in *qasida* rhymes. This feature has only lately been revived in Persian after the influence of European literature. Khusru was not a follower of old conventions in poetry. His similes and metaphors are new and his style inimitable because it is so simple and unique in expression. His works have been numbered about one hundred, and the total number of his lines has been estimated at between four and five hundred thousand. His poems and songs in Indian languages, which according to his own opinion should have been about one third more in volume than his Persian poetry, are almost completely lost. He is also known to have written books on Indian music which are not extant today. His treatise on prose writing which is in three volumes is the first book on the subject in the Persian language.

The change that Moslems wrought in Indian music was similar in nature to that effected in painting and poetry. The new school sought to translate the lyrical spirit of the *ghazal* into music. None could be fitter for the task than Khusru. The forms of musical composition that prevailed in Northern India in Khusru's time were mainly: *kabit*, *man*, *dhruwa*, *parband* and *dhurpad*. The language used in these compositions was generally a mixture of Sanskrit and Prakrit and the theme often religious or ceremonial. Amir Khusru invented nine new forms of musical composition: *qaul*, *qalbana*, *tarana*, *khayal*, *naqsh*, *gul*, *basit*, *tallana* and *sohla*. The language of these compositions was mixed Persian and Hindi, the vernacular of Delhi. The *tarana* was purely lyrical, *qaul* and *qalbana* were lyrical with a strong mixture of sufic philosophy.

To Khusru's credit goes the invention of the *Sitar* which is so commonly played upon in India today. Another invention of his is the *dholak* (a kind of drum used by women in Northern India). Khusru's inventions in music were originally meant to be played upon his sitar and dholak. His compositions are remarkable in the harmonious blending of the Persian music with the music of India, and are as lyrical and romantic as his poetry. Books on music like those of Faqirullah's Persian translation of the *Rag-Darpan*, Mirza Khan's chapter on music in *Tuhfatul-Hind*, etc., have analysed Khusru's compositions and given slightly differing accounts of the same. His *ragas* and *raginis* are mixtures of Persian and Indian *ragas* and *raginis*. Khusru had



invented a system of seventeen *talas* to accompany his sitar and dholak. With the exception of a few, we are told, the rest are in common use today.

Khusru being a musician as well as scholar, his services were availed of by students of *qir'at*, that is, recitation of the Quran. Nobles used to send their children to learn the recitation and Khusru would select the best among them for training them in his own inventions in music. He had thus formed a school of music. His greatest rival in music in Alauddin Khalji's time was the famous Naik Gopal. When asked by the king to show his talents against Gopal, Khusru took his students to the court. While Gopal was a past master in the current Indian music, he had no idea of the new inventions of Khusru. The novelty and the lyrical appeal of the *qaul* won the day for Khusru. The King gave Khusru the title of *Qawwali*, that is, singer of the *qaul*. Since then the title *Qawwali* has meant the class of musicians that specialise in this composition. An interesting feature of the *qaul* or the *qalbana* was that the original wording of the compositions was partly in Arabic and partly in the Persianised Hindi. The verses of the Quran were used as *asthai* and were recited musically instead of the lengthy *alāp*. After the *asthai* the *antara* was either in Urdu, that is in Persianised Hindi, or in Persian.

As a poet Khusru became very popular wherever he went. He mixed with the people and composed verses in their languages to amuse them. His Indian poetry, of which only a few popular verses have come down to us, sufficiently prove his mastery over the languages he has used, for example, Khari of Delhi, Braj Bhakha, and the Avadhi. He happens to be one of the earliest poets in the literature of these languages. He loved everything that was common and of the soil. The people in the street interested him and he spoke of them in his poems. He loved life in all its forms and colours. He sings of the dandies, otherwise commonly attired, but who must wear their turban a little tilted to one side. He sings of the boy that sells oil in the street and of whose glib tongue and oily hands the people of the city complain so much. He sings the praises of the curd-selling woman. The big pot on her head he compares to the royal umbrella. She is like a moon in beauty and it is honey and sugar that drop from her lips when she cries 'buy curd !' ( *daki leho daki !* ). The goldsmith's boy shouting in the street, 'get your ornaments repaired!' takes away the heart of the poet, pure gold, but neither mends it nor

repairs it. The poet was enamoured of Indian words ; he uses them in his poems for sheer love of them. No other poet has used so many Indian words in his Persian poems as Khusru has done. Beside the names of flowers, fruits and objects of common use, he even makes use of local phrases. There has been an occasion in which a line of his poetry could not be understood in Persia because an Indian word, *sal*, which is the name of a tree, was read as the Persian word, *sal*, meaning 'year', the result being a confusion of sense.

Of great interest are his riddles in old Urdu that are still told to children by their parents, in somewhat modified language but in the same metre and rhyme. Children still get pleasure in finding out the name of the object ingeniously suggested in the poem. Khusru took much pleasure in writing poems for children in their dialect. This is obvious from the number of such poems that have come down to us. It is related of him that he was once passing by a well where some girls were busy drawing water. Khusru felt thirsty and made for the well. The girls recognised him and wanted a poem from him before they would give him *pani* ( water ) to drink. Each of them suggested the name of the object she liked most. One of them said she would like the poem to be about *khir*, that is, the sweet prepared of rice and milk. Another said the poem should be about her *charkha*, the spinning-wheel. The third suggested *kutta* ( dog ) and the last one said *dhol* ( drum ). The poet said:

Khir pakai jatan se  
Charkha diya jala,  
Aya kutta kha giya  
Tu baithi dhol baja;  
La pani pila.

The girls were greatly amused and gave him water to drink.

It would be difficult to find a man in the Hindi speaking provinces of India who is not familiar with the common rainy season song, *Jo piya awan kaih ga'e*. . . , as also with the other rainy season song sung by girls, *Ke swan aya*. . . , both of which are said to have been composed by Amir Khusru. There are hundreds of other seasonal songs but none so vitally interwoven with the emotions and memories of the masses as these two. Amir Khusru is also credited with the adoption and introduction of the Indian spring festival, called *basant pancami*, in the form it is observed at Moslem centres of religious importance as Delhi, Ajmer and other places. The idea was a glorious one, and the story of its origin is worth relating. It is said,

the great saint Nizamuddin Auliya, whose most devoted disciple Khusru was, could not get over the impression the death of a young relative of his had made upon his mind. The spring had come again with the message of new life and the saint was still brooding over the unhappy incident. Out in the suburbs of Delhi the earth was blooming yellow with the flowers of the mustard crop ; the Hindus, who were out to enjoy the spring were all dressed in yellow and threw colours at each other and sang the merry songs of spring. Khusru was with the people enjoying the festival when all of a sudden new tunes of spring came to his mind. He plucked a few mustard flowers, arranged them in his turban, tilted the turban to one side in the manner of the dandy and singing his new song he went before the saint. The saint was moved by the spring mood that had come over Khusru and smiled again. The *basant pancami* was henceforth to be observed in the manner in which the poet had brought it to the saint.

Amir Khusru dedicated his *Nuh-Sipehr* to Qutbuddin, the successor of Alauddin Khalji, and received a real elephant's weight of silver coins as his well deserved reward. This poem in nine chapters was written in answer to Nizami's *Haft Asman*. The third chapter relates to India in which he describes the greatness of this country, its beauties, its cultural superiority to the rest of the world. Apart from the many virtues in which he finds India excelling, he produces "ten evidences" for asserting India's superiority, which might interest the reader. "That my assertion be not passed over as doubtful," says the poet, "I would produce ten evidences, not one." These evidences are then enumerated with the boldness and sincerity which testify to the national pride that Khusru took in his being Indian. He argues: in every place in India knowledge is to be found in abundance ; Indian people are able to speak the language of other peoples with ease and eloquence, while the Turks, the Moghals and the Arabs are not able to speak the language of the Indians ; to India have hailed people in search of knowledge, but the Brahmins of India have never set their foot out of their land to beg knowledge from other people ; they were the Indians who invented the numerical signs and the zero which even the Greeks had to accept ; *Kalila wa Dimna* ( the *Panc Tantra* ) was written in India ; chess was invented by Indians ; Indian Music is undoubtedly superior to that of the rest of the world ; the Brahmin in his intellectual capacities is able to tear away the treatises of Aristotle ; in every intellectual field

India is greatly ahead of the world ; in physical, mathematical sciences, in astronomy and astrology they are superior to all other peoples ; and ( allowing the poet his legitimate vanity ) India is great because it gave birth to Khusru.

In his other poems also he has often upheld the superiority of India to other countries. Strange as it may sound, it is only in religion that India seemed to him deficient, for it did not give birth to Islam ; though the religions of India are superior to the other religions, including Christianity and Zoroastrianism.

It was Khusru's broad-mindedness and tolerance that won him the great popularity he enjoyed among his people. Amiable, full of humour and ready wit, he was a distinguished member in every company. Of racial prejudices he had few. He emphasised the points that were common between Hindus and Moslems. People might have asked him the reason why he preferred India to other countries so emphatically. While he had some reasons, which we have enumerated above, his main argument was : "India is the land of my birth." As for the religious differences, he observed : "Although the Hindus do not believe in our faith, yet many of their beliefs are similar to those we hold. They believe in the unity and eternity of God. . . . they worship, no doubt, stones, beasts, plants and the sun, but they do recognise that these objects are creations of God and worship them simply because their forefathers have done so."

This note on Amir Khusru would be incomplete if it did not mention, however briefly, his connections with the royal courts of his days and the extraordinary love and regard the poet had for one of the greatest saints of his time, Nizamuddin Auliya. When the throne of Delhi passed into the hands of Jalauddin Khalji, Khusru was invited as the court poet of the kingdom and greatly honoured. He was elevated to the state of a noble and given the title of Amir which has since then become an integral part of his name. The next king, Alauddin Khalji, was the stingiest king that ever occupied the throne of Delhi. He ruled for about 25 years during which long period Khusru did not receive more than one thousand and twenty-five rupees of those days per annum. Strange it is that Alauddin's period should have produced such a long list of eminent scholars and poets. Qutbuddin, who succeeded Alauddin, was an unworthy successor of his father, but he it was who gave Khusru an elephant's weight of silver for his *Nuh-Sipehr*. His reign was a short one and, after him, Ghiasuddin Balban occupied the throne. He was good to the poet and rewarded

him amply for his talents. When Ghiasuddin came to Bengal, Khusru accompanied him and remained there for sometime, when the sudden news of the death of the saint Nizamuddin Auliya made him hasten to Delhi. He was greatly attached to the saint and the saint also loved him as he did none else. A mood of renunciation came over Khusru ; he distributed all his wealth to the needy, clad himself in black mourning for the saint, lodged himself near his grave where he died six months after. He was buried at the foot of the saint's grave.

Eulogies of his patrons he had to write, for that was one of the recognized functions of the poets. To this part of his business he never could do justice. In his *Laila wa Majnun* he grieves: "From morning till night and from night till morning, I toil in my abode of sorrow, I do not recline to rest ; why ? All because of this egoistic self of mine. Must I keep standing in ceremony before one just like myself ?" For a versatile genius of the nature of Khusru, spending time in formal ceremonies at the royal court, was more than he could calmly put up with. He always selected the patron that best suited him and who could really appreciate him. Such a patron he had found in Maik Muhammad Qaan, later known as Khan Shahid, the heir apparent of Sultan Ghiasuddin Balban. Amir Khusru lived with him for about five years at Multan. Khan Shahid had to face the great raid of Timur in which the Khan was killed and Amir Khusru taken prisoner, and sent to Balkh. From the prison Khusru used to send his elegies on the tragic death of Khan Shahid which the people in India read for months and wailed over their precious loss. When Khusru returned from Balkh after two years of imprisonment, he read his last elegy at the court of Ghiasuddin Balban. The whole court wept most bitterly and the father, the king, fainted and fell sick and died shortly after this incident. Khan Shahid was himself a man of letters and a critic of recognised authority. He fully appreciated the worth of Amir Khusru. He it was who twice invited Sa'di to come to India to which request of his Sa'di wrote that he was too old to risk such a long journey, and requested instead that the Khan should take care of the poet Khusru, who was the greatest poet of his age.



*By Robindranath*



## E. B. HAVELL

Benode Behari Mukherjee

THE Student of modern Indian art is well acquainted with the name of the late Mr. E. B. Havell. It is not my purpose here to relate his life-story or to give an analytical criticism of his paintings and writings. But I will try to give an outline of his activities in order to show his real contribution to, and the true purpose of, the movement which he started to re-establish the cultural consciousness of the educated Indians in the rich foundations of their own aesthetic traditions.

It was the time when the fever of imitating Western Culture was blinding our Indian mind. In Bengal, literature alone had been rescued from this general perversion of values and given a truly national form through the genius of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore. But in the other fields of culture, in painting, sculpture, architecture, house decoration and dress, a pseudo-European taste held full sway. In this cultural atmosphere of India Havell arrived as Principal of the Government School of Art, Madras, to teach the method and ideal of Western art which the Indian mind was so eager to learn. But Havell proved too great a man to encourage wrong values and he soon set himself to draw the attention of the authorities and the Indian public to works of Indian art and started his movement to revive the handloom industry. After some time he came to Bengal as Principal of the Government School of Art, Calcutta, and here he began his work in right earnest till he fell ill and was compelled to leave India. Though in the beginning his work and his programme were much misunderstood, and he was criticised both by his countrymen and by Indians, the last part of his stay in India was rewarded with some measure of grateful appreciation. Before he left for Europe the "Bangya Sahitya Parisad" ( the foremost literary association in Bengal ) gave him a farewell address.

It is popularly believed that Havell's main concern was with the revival of Indian painting. Though this is true in a sense, it is taking a very limited view of his actual work to imply that he was concerned only with the revival of Indian painting. Havell began his work from quite a different angle. He had understood the root of the defect, and had placed a much more comprehensive and fundamental ideal of work before himself. He had the vision to see that true art is not a mere



means occupying the leisure of the cultured classes but must permeate the daily life and activity of the people as a whole. He, therefore, set himself to restore the position of the village crafts in the art-life of this country. With this end in view he tried to remodel the then existing art school and opened a new department of crafts, particularly the hand-loom work. He brought various craftsmen from all over India and made it compulsory for the art students to learn stencilling, paper-cutting, etc, though to work under a mere artisan was regarded a great humiliation by many of the students.

These new changes were not appreciated by the public and his introducing hand-loom in an art school was bitterly criticised. And no wonder, for the aesthetic culture of our people was in its worst possible stage. In the field of painting Raja Ravi Varma was the uncrowned king of India. His followers were numerous and they were convinced that only by studying oil painting could they do anything in the world of art. Havell went to the other extreme and brought a hereditary artist, a man by name Lala Iswariprasad, for the students of his painting class. The attached gallery of the school was full of copies of European masterpieces. Havell had them all removed and brought in their place Indian miniature paintings of Moghul, Rajput and other schools. All this was very shocking to the "cultured" people of that age. I have quoted a long letter by Havell at the end of this article—*An Open Letter to Educated Indians*—in which he tried to persuade his contemporaries to a living sense of the relation of art to life. Though the letter is rather long, I have taken the liberty to quote the whole of it in the hope that it has not lost its significance even today.

But though Havell was bitterly criticised by the people of Bengal, he got his greatest associate and friend from this province—Abanindranath Tagore. Two of his own countrymen also gave him their valuable moral and intellectual support—Sir John Woodroff and Sister Nivedita. With the help of Abanindranath Tagore, Havell's school began to come to its own and attracted to it the best artistic talent of the province. Havell also gained deeper insight in Indian culture which helped him not a little in his interpretation of Indian Art and Aesthetics. The popularity of Havell's school reached its height when the growth of the Indian National Movement made people conscious of their legitimate pride in the cultural heritage of their land. It is to the undying credit of the English race that some of their own people have helped us to break through the nightmare of their domination.

But in spite of the glory that Abanindranath Tagore and his

famous batch of pupils have achieved for the school of painting founded by Havell, Havell's real contribution to the cause of Indian culture remains only partially recognised. For painting was only a part of his endeavours which were really directed to restoring the aesthetic judgment of the Indians, which he believed was subtler and profounder than that of the modern Europeans. At that time it needed a brave man to maintain such a faith, for even some of Havell's own students thought it so unreal as to suspect that Havell was only trying deliberately to mislead their education so as to save the art of his race from the competition of Indian imitators. Just as, if Gandhiji's movement today did not vindicate Havell's passionate advocacy of the Hand-loom, "shrewd" Indians might continue to suspect that Havell's advocacy was only a trick to sabotage India's industrial progress. And yet when New Delhi was to be built, it was Havell's voice and Havell's pen that pleaded for the right of the Indian artists, architects and craftsmen to build the capital of their land. His writings on that occasion express his ideas more clearly than anything else.

Here one may also refer to the "copy books" which Havell prepared for the Indian art student. Because he selected his drawings from Moghul and Rajput art, these "copy books" have not had the recognition that they deserve, save in some private art institutions. Government schools prefer to use "copy books" imported from abroad, because our Education Departments cannot believe that drawings based on the works of Moghul and Rajput Masters can be sufficiently correct.

It is not a happy thing to reflect on the scanty justice that has been done to Havell's service to this country. We reproduce below two "Letters" by him, first published in contemporary journals while he was in India, which will show that, though as a historian and scholar of Indian art Havell may not claim the authority of Fergusson or Coomaraswamy, yet as an inspirer, as a guide, and as a friend of Indian art and culture, his name should be cherished with gratitude by every Indian who loves the culture and tradition of his country.

#### APPENDIX I

##### *An Open Letter to Educated Indians.*

Few people who have not devoted time and thought to the

consideration of art look upon it otherwise than as a pleasant relaxation from the serious concerns of life. It is quite true that we can perfectly well live and die without the forms of art to which people nowadays are most accustomed. This is the art of which, unfortunately, we see most in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. There are other forms of art which contribute to our intellectual enjoyment, but are not indispensable to our spiritual well-being. But art, in its truest and deepest sense, is just as interesting and just as valuable to you as it is to me. It is something which is of the deepest concern to every human being who thinks and prays. Art may be defined as the science of the beautiful. It is derived, fundamentally, like all other branches of science, from the study of that great book of Nature, written by the hand of the supreme artist of the Universe—God himself. . . .

The three phases of art, namely, the spiritual, the intellectual and the material, can be easily traced, interchanging one with the other, in the art history of all countries. But one fact is always prominent—that in the greatest periods of every country's art the spiritual element is in the ascendant ; the greatest artists have always been the greatest spiritual teachers. To apply those wonderful words of Plato : they use the beauties of Earth as steps along which they, and those who learn from them, mount upwards. This explains why in all its greatest developments, art has always been closely associated with religion. The beauty of things is not to be regarded merely for the intellectual pleasure it gives, but for the stimulus it conveys to the spiritual faculties. Fair forms, as Plato says, lead up to fair actions. Now, no doubt, there are highly developed human beings to whom this stimulus is not necessary. There are those who can live without any art in its concrete form, who can read God's great book, the book of Nature, for themselves, without the aid of an interpreter. But, rightly regarded, they are the greatest artists of them all. They have reached the third stage in Plato's progression. Their minds are so attuned to Nature's great law of beauty as to create only ideas of beauty. They are the world's greatest spiritual teachers. One might argue from this that the outward, concrete forms of art are not necessary at all for our spiritual development, and thus regard all artistic work as a part of our equipment for the voyage of life which can be easily dispensed with. One might just as reasonably argue that because some few people can live religious lives without the outward forms and symbols of religion, therefore we should smash all religious images and symbols and dispense with all religious ritual. As long

as human nature remains as it is, we need the forms of art and the forms of religion as stepping stones to higher things.

I have said that in the greatest periods of every country's art the spiritual element is always in the ascendant. Art in such periods is speaking with a living voice of the hopes and fears, the joys and sufferings of body and spirit, the strivings and yearnings of humanity. It has its lessons for each and all of us. It expounds the great book of Nature for those who cannot interpret it themselves. It cheers and comforts us in our journey through life. When the spiritual element is suppressed and the intellectual takes the highest place, art is already on the decline. It ministers to our intellectual enjoyment, but it has no message, no word of hope, to cheer us on our way. The lowest depths of degradation are reached when materialism gets the upper hand. Then art is practically dead, it either ceases to influence national life, or merely gratifies the lower instincts of human nature, our pride, vanity, selfishness and love of display. Those who have studied the history of modern art in Europe can clearly trace in it the effect of the three leading influences, spirituality, intellectuality and materialism. In the 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th centuries art in Europe was a great living force in the spiritual progress of the people. The vitality it accumulated during this long period was sufficient to carry it through the early part of the so-called Italian Renaissance which, as far as art was concerned, was a purely intellectual movement. But the Renaissance contained within itself the germs of decay, for it did not spring from any deep-seated national sentiment, without which no art can continue to flourish, but was only an outburst of intellectual admiration for the newly-found treasures of ancient Greek and Roman art. From the end of the seventeenth century the decay of European art was rapid, for the vital force—the national sentiment—had gone out of it. The affectation and insincerity of eighteenth century art gradually merged into the barbarity and vulgarity of the nineteenth. The less said about 19th century art the better. European art is now struggling to emerge from this Slough of Despond. If it ever regains all its old vitality and spiritual force it can only be through a thorough purging of social and intellectual life.

Now, if you have followed my argument, you will understand that a living and healthy condition of art is a great spiritual force. If you have any regard for India's spiritual welfare you cannot be indifferent to the interest of her art. I fear that few educated Indians really understand what Indian art is, and has been ; to see it one must

go to other places than the great commercial centres of India, infected as they are with the gross materialism of modern Europe. To understand Indian art it is necessary to know something of its past achievements. But I want mostly to interest you in the Indian art of the present day, which, to India's shame be it said, is slowly dying through the neglect and indifference of Indian people. You may say that the Government might do a great deal more to keep alive the art of the country. I myself have continually pointed out that well-intentioned efforts made by Government to encourage Indian art generally do more harm than good. The export trade in so-called Indian art-productions which the Government try to develop is certainly dragging Indian art down to the same level as the modern commercial art of Europe. I have no faith in art exhibitions, art museums, or schools of art as agencies for preserving or stimulating the spirituality of Indian art. That is the concern of the people of India, and theirs alone. You do not expect Government to understand and aid you in your religious movements. Why should you expect them to understand and keep alive your art? Even supposing that Government did all that might possibly be done, it would not be the thousandth part of what you could do yourselves. The living art of India is crying to you in a voice of which you, and you alone, can understand the meaning. If you, who are India's children, will not listen to her voice, how can you expect that Englishmen should do so? What I want most to impress upon you is, that in the living art of India you have a priceless possession because it still retains the spirituality which modern European art has almost entirely lost. It will be a lasting shame to the present generation of Indians if the spiritual inheritance which your forefathers have bequeathed to you is lost for ever through your indifference.

How, you may ask, can we help Indian art? By bringing it back to your own homes, and above all by using the living styles of your own country instead of the dead styles of Europe in building your houses, mansions, or palaces. It is from mere ignorance and from foolishly following a senseless fashion, and not from any sense of superior beauty, comfort, convenience, or economy that you have allowed the architecture of your country to be neglected. The greatest authority on both European and Indian architecture, James Fergusson, F. R. S., F. R. I., B. A., admitted that he had learnt more of the secrets of true architecture from watching the construction of buildings designed by Indian architects than he had learnt from all the European books he had read.

In India alone, he writes, can the true principles of architecture be seen in practice at the present day. "Architecture in Europe is now little more than a dead corpse galvanised into spasmodic life by a few selected practitioners, for the amusement and delight of a small section of the specially educated classes." Since the sixteenth century architects in Europe "forsook the principles on which architecture and all other cognate arts had been practised from the beginning of time, they forsook common sense and common prudence, not in the hope of attaining greater convenience or greater effect, more easily or with less means, but in order to reproduce certain associations with which education has made them familiar." Educated India is doing the same thing to-day, but with this great difference that whereas the European of the sixteenth century imitated the masterpieces of Greece and Rome and, however far they strayed from true architectural principles, generally produced things aesthetically admirable—the Indians now, duped by every artistic charlatan, and blindly following the common commercial art of modern Europe, surround themselves with vulgar monstrosities and foolishly affect to despise all that is beautiful and true in the art of their own country.

E. B. Havell.

## APPENDIX II

### *Hand-loom Weaving in India.*

I notice that Sir George Watt in the preface to his interesting Lecture on "Cotton Improvement" has been repeating before a London audience all the old fallacies regarding the power-loom in India which I have been trying to expose for several years past in your columns and elsewhere. If he had kept strictly within his subject and confined his remarks to cotton ginning, I should find little to object to in his conclusions, but Sir George Watt's references to weaving are likely to retard what I believe to be a most important movement for the improvement of Indian hand-looms, which has lately commenced in many parts of India. Sir George affirms that "the dawn of India's second life in the cotton industries broke with the establishment of the first steam-power spinning and weaving factories. As in Europe, so in India, that new life meant the gradual annihilation of hand-loom weaving." Here is one of those mischievous

analogies between Europe and India which are so often brought forward in discussing Indian problems. "It might almost be said that already steam-power, especially in spinning, had driven hand labour out of the market." In support of this assertion Sir George Watt brings forward the fact that the Indian mills are directly or indirectly giving employment to 350,000 persons, "or say one in every 660 of the entire population of India." Are these figures so very convincing when it is considered that after fifty years of direct competition with the power-loom and the investment of £12,000,900 sterling in the extremely doubtful advantage of concentrating native industries in large towns, the primitive native hand-loom still supports, directly or indirectly, about 12,000,000 persons, or about one in thirty of the population? It may be granted that the Indian hand-loom industry is but a shadow of its former state, and is steadily declining, but the fact that the ordinary native hand-loom, which still remains in the same form as the European hand-loom of 150 years ago, can be made to increase its out-turn at least four or five times with the same labour should be sufficient to refute the argument that nothing can be done to save the Indian hand-loom industry from extinction. I have repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that there are in Serampur and the surrounding districts in Bengal 10,000 native weavers who have doubled their earnings and the out-turn of their looms by a few simple improvements which cost about Rs. 15 per loom; and I have pointed to the example of a Belgium Company at Cairo competing successfully with power-loom factories by using the latest English hand-loom with unskilled Arab labour. If we take the lowest estimate and assume that two-thirds of the native hand-loom weavers can easily double the efficiency of their apparatus, this would be equivalent to a protective customs duty of about 100 per cent. favouring Indian hand-made cloth. Would any Indian or European power-loom mills be able to compete with hand-weaving under such conditions? The right policy to adopt in this question is not to ignore the great hand-loom industry of India, which even now is India's greatest industry after agriculture, or to draw false analogies between European and Indian industrial problems, but to encourage and assist hand-loom weaving by the introduction of the extraordinary improvements in apparatus which have been made in the last 150 years. . . .

E. B. Havell.

## SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MANLINESS

( *From the sayings of Saint Dadu—a mediaeval mystic* )

Kshitimohan Sen

THOSE who have any acquaintance with the lives and teaching of the mediaeval saints of India, know how many-sided was the spiritual culture they advocated, for it was not their way to exalt any one side of the whole man at the expense of another. Dadu's chief disciple, Rajjabji, says for instance : "You would cut down manly qualities for the sake of cultivating *ahimsa*, but is not that doing violence to manhood itself,—what else is it but *himsa* ?" This should make us beware of labelling the spiritual culture of those days as mere mediaevalism.

As it appears from their recorded sayings, these saints used to divide the faculties of man into different classes and to regulate their spiritual striving so that each might reach its highest level, just as good methods of physical development prescribe for the body a set of regulated exercises for strengthening every limb. Dadu himself was one of the manliest of the saints of that period and, as we find from his poems touching on the point, he laid special stress on spiritual bravery.

Dadu was born in 1544 A.C. and had already passed his thirtieth year when, after attaining enlightenment, he came and took his seat at Amber, in Rajputana. The reputation of his saintliness soon reached Delhi, whereupon the Emperor Akbar expressed a desire to see him. Dadu at first held back, saying : "What have I to do with the Emperor ?" But when the reply came that it was not as Emperor but as one "who thirsted for divine communion," that Akbar sought the saint's acquaintance, Dadu yielded, and the interview between the two kindred spirits came off at length, not at Delhi, but at Sikri, the Abode of Devotion, in 1586.

On the point of starting for Sikri, Dadu was cautioned by some of his disciples that if his words met with the disapproval of the Emperor, who held religious views of his own, Dadu might get into trouble, even lose his life. To which the saint replied : "It is but good fortune if one should render up body, mind, and life itself in the service of the All Merciful, whose gifts they are. What is there to be afraid of in such death ?"



I present here a few of Dadu's sayings from the section of his collected poems known as *Sharātana* ( on valour ).

Here ( *in the quest of Truth* ) is the battle-ground of the brave,—  
Here there's no room for the faint-hearted.

काहर काम न आवई यहू सुरे का पेत । 24, 15.

The valiant one is ever engaged in battle,—of retreat he never thinks.  
Fie on such life, O Dadu, should the servant shame his Lord by flight.

सूरा चढ़ि संग्रामकाँ पाछा पग क्यों देइ ।

साहिब लाजै भाजतां धग जीवन दादू तेइ ॥ 44, 22.

One foot in the grave has the saint always,  
Ever ready to meet the will of his Lord.

मरिबे ऊपरि एक पग करता करै सो होइ । 24, 22.

Yield not an inch, for on this path death is welcome ;  
Let come what may, look not behind in dismay.

इस मारण माँहें मरणां । तिल पीछें पाव न घरणां ॥

अब आगे होइ छ होई । पीछें सोच न करणां कोई ॥ Pada 189.

Dadu makes it clear that this battle of which he speaks is not against external enemies, but the enemies who are entrenched within the self :

Not the low desires of your mind, but your body you would kill ;  
Thus on the hole you deal your blows, while the snake stays safe inside.

मन मनसा मारै नहीं काया मारण जाहि ।

दादू बाँबी मारिये सर्प मरै क्यों माँहि ॥ 24, 62.

They all outwardly play the brave ;  
But look within, and there's the coward !

बाहरि सूरा देखिये दादू भीतरि पोच ॥ 24, 8.

They wait and wait for others to save them ;  
He alone is brave, says Dadu, who saves himself.

जीवूँ का संसा पक्षी को का कौँ तारै ।

दादू सोई सुरिवाँ जे आप उबारै ॥ 24, 25.

Have naught to do with him who now advances, now retreats,  
Who faces both ways, and then shows his back !

आगा चलि पीछा फिरै ताका मुंह मदीठ ।

दादू देखै दोह दल भागै देकरि पीठ ॥ 24, 29.

. .

What boots it to be arrayed in full armour ?  
The hero bares his breast to the blow.

जब भूमै तब जाणिये काछि खडे क्या होइ ।

चोट मुहै मुहं षाहगा दादू सुरा सोइ ॥ 24, 64.

. .

Valour snaps all bonds and leaps over Mount Sumeru ;  
Says Dadu : Remain fearless, for the coward will not snap even a blade  
of grass.

सुरा होइ सुमेर उलवै सब गुण बंध्या छूटै ।

दादू निर्भै ह्वै रहै काइर तिणा न टूटै ॥ 24, 31.

. .

And there's no coward like Dadu, who hesitates on the brink ;  
Different is the brave one : eager is he to plunge into the fray.

दादू हम काइर करबा करि रहें सूर निराला होइ ।

निकसि खड़ा मैदान में ता सम और न कोइ ॥ 20, 5.

. .

Not a step back, but ahead he goes,  
Till the unapproachable goal is won.

पीछै कौं पग ना भरै आगै कौं पग देइ ।

दादू यहु मत सूर का अगम ठौर कौं लेइ ॥ 24, 28.

. .

Strong in thy might, O Father, Dadu fears no earthly king ;  
Thou alone art his Lord and Master, all else unreal.

दादू बलि तुम्हारे बापजी गिणत न राणा राव ।

मीर मालिक प्रधान पति तुम बिन सबही बाव ॥ 24, 73.

. .

It is interesting to enquire how far the balanced virility of Dadu's spirit survived him, for the tendency of the rank and file always is to split into sections laying separate stress on one or other aspect of the

whole teaching of the Master. And this appears to be what happened to Dadu's followers after him.

One set literally followed the cult of bravery, forgetful of its spirit, and became the *Naga* sect of ascetics, who eventually degenerated into mere mercenary fighters, joining the forces of one or other of the contending chieftains of Rajputana, and who were also to be found in large numbers in the British armies which eventually conquered India. Such was their downfall, in spite of their unquestioned bravery, because of their neglect of the spiritual side of the Master's teaching.

On the other hand, the spiritual descendants of Dadu, in the original monastery of Narana ( *Nārāyanā* ) lapsed into the quietism of mechanical practices, falling away from the wholeness of their founder's culture.

About a hundred years after Dadu's death, towards the latter end of 1706, the Sikh Guru, Govind Singh, paid a visit to Narana monastery, of which the devotee Jaitji was then the head. Guru Govind asked him to recite some message from Dadu, on which Jaitji repeated verses to the effect: "Be not tempted by the worldly life, free thyself from desire, ask not for worldly riches," etc.

Thereupon Guru Govind admonished him saying: "Such counsel may be good and useful for founding a religion, but this passiveness will never do to save and protect it. Say rather: 'Claim to rule the world, destroy the dominion of the evil-doer, give no quarter to the enemy of the good.'

"But," objected Jaitji, "our founder has advised that if one hurls a clod at you, accept it meekly on your head."

Then continued Guru Govind: "We have now fallen upon evil days, wrong-doers have the upper hand, saints are being grievously persecuted. Our endeavours must be directed to remedy all this. Only those who take up arms in this cause are worthy of the name of devotee. That is why I have established my *khalsa*, given my sikhs the initiation of the sword, and made of them lions ( *singh* ) among men."

Guru Govind had evidently appreciated the true spirit of Dadu's teaching, for he made his parting prostration before the saint's tomb, though such obeisance in honour of the dead was forbidden by the rules of his own sect. The degeneration of Dadu's followers was obviously due to the divorce of one side of the life of man's spirit from the other,—of love from valour, of valour from love.

As for Dadu, wherever he speaks of love he does so in a manly

spirit. I conclude with some more of his verses, which will make his own attitude clear.

I'd be afraid of losing life, had it been mine to lose.  
He who is its Creator knows best what he would do with it.

दादू जाते जिवथे तौ डरूं जे जिव मेरा होइ ।  
जिन यहु जीव उपाइया सार करैगा सोइ ॥ 24, 77.

. .

Dread not death, for death is the destined end,  
Death is but created to proclaim life.

मरणे थीं तूं मति डरे मरणां अंति निदान ।  
रे मन मरण सिरज्या कहिले केवल प्राणॐ ॥ 24, 47.

. .

Life is the price we must pay  
To be worthy to utter the Lord's name.

सिर कै साटे लीजिये साहिब जी का नांव ॥ 24, 44.

. .

If love is what you're thirsting for.  
Then hanker not after mere life.

जे तूं प्यासा प्रेमका तौ जीवन की क्या आस ।  
24, 60.

. .

Ah ! for the fulfilment of death,—  
In death shall we not mingle with him ?

दावूं मरणा सब है मरि मांहे मिलि जाइ । 24, 52.

# ERRATA.

## Vol. III, Part I.

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Read</i>	<i>In place of</i>
9	17	serve	awe
"	"	ever	even
"	footnote(3-4)	published	written and published
"	" (4)	by about twelve	by
"	" (5)	men and women	men
10	14	fortune	future
"	15	keep	build
13	4	father	grandfather
14	14	baseness	business
"	20	some months	one month
16	6	has been composed	composed
18	9	drew	drawn
"	31	Earth	soil
19	7	<i>Strike out the word 'confounded' within brackets</i>	

## Vol. III, Part II.

181	37	113	147
"	"	73	96
"	39	illiterate	literate (first word)

## REVIEWS

PERSONAL REALISM: By James Bissett Pratt,  
New York, The Macmillan Company, 1937.

ONE of the joint authors of "Critical Realism", Mr. James Bissett Pratt is very well known for the freshness and vigour with which he has championed the cause of Realism against its idealistic critics. The present book represents perhaps his maturest thoughts on the problems of philosophy.

He is very modest in his claims. "The best we can claim or hope for (in philosophy)," he says, "is a preponderance of probability." Lest anybody should feel any disappointment at this, he hastens to add, "The best than any of the sciences can do or ever will be able to do is to point out the balance of probability." At the end of the book he returns to the same theme, and in a passage which is remarkable for its frankness and sincerity says, "Well, these are my over-beliefs, my ultimate guesses . . . I think these beliefs and over-beliefs of mine are probable." This is all very good. It is far better to admit at the outset the shortcomings of one's philosophy than to assert dogmatically that one has been able to give a final solution to all philosophical questions. Philosophy, certainly, is a quest rather than an achievement. But still we expect a philosopher to come progressively near to a solution of the problems that confront us. We want something more than the assurance that "philosophy is the best, the only timepiece that we have."

The author does scant justice to the importance of meaning. "Objects, events, experiences, sequences, collections," he says, "must have *character* ; if they are to *be* at all, they must be something in particular . . . But things can very well have character without meaning anything." But what is this character, if it does not mean anything? Especially, if it is to be "something in particular", it must have a definite meaning, it cannot be a mere 'that' without any 'what'. The 'what', in fact, is that which gives it its particular character.

It is symptomatic of the author's general attitude of compromise that on the question whether relations are internal or external, his answer is that they are both. The universe, the author says, "is neither a through-and-through relational and completely unitary One, nor an

atomistic Many, made up of finite absolutes. The terms which I am insisting upon cannot properly be called little absolutes, for absolute means 'cut off from all relations'. On my view, all the terms, all the reals, are interrelated. . . But while there are no terms which are unrelated, and while the relational characters of terms are usually their most important aspects, each still possesses its own intrinsic qualities which are not created by, nor dependent upon, relations to other terms. Whether such a view will be called a monism or a pluralism I do not know: and I confess I do not greatly care." He may not care, but his readers certainly do care. Whether the qualia are to be treated as absolute, or whether their relational character is to be emphasized, makes all the difference in the world. The author practically accepts idealism when he says that the relational characters are usually their most important aspects, for if they are the most important aspects their independent characters are only subsidiary features. It is possible, therefore, for the relational characters which are "the most important aspects" to drive the independent characters out of the field. Once you admit the relative importance of the relational characters your realism is finished, and your subsequent desperate clinging to it is like the proverbial drowning man catching at a straw.

In Chapter XII the author deals with the general realistic position. He begins by saying that in spite of the individual differences, all realistic theories show a general family resemblance. For example, all realists hold that there is a world of physical, spatial objects and of psychophysical organisms.

He next mentions the arguments of Berkeley against realism and quotes with approval Perry's remark that the apparent plausibility of Berkeley's view rests upon "the ego-centric predicament", which consists in the fact that "no thinker to whom one may appeal is able to mention a thing that is not idea, for the obvious reason that in mentioning it he makes it an idea." He gives an example which is even better than those given by Perry. "The arguments of the idealist would be similar to those of a biologist who, when asked, what the mosquito ate when no human being was present would reply: It is impossible to observe what the mosquitoes eat without being present as an observer: hence we must conclude that they eat nothing except when under observation. Or he might even insist that no mosquitoes exist except when an observer is present" (pp. 156-57). We would like to ask: What idealist in modern times has asserted that a thing cannot exist unless a human being is present to observe it? Even the

"good" Berkeley brought in a God to show how things could exist even if no human observer were present. But the modern idealist does not rest his case upon any form of "Esse est percipi". The existence of mosquitoes certainly does not depend upon the presence of an observer, but it undoubtedly has meaning and is connected with the fulfilment of a purpose. The author's statement, "Assertions must have meaning ; existents need not" (p. 157), is an *ipse dixit* for which he gives no reason. If the idealist fails to accept this *ipse dixit* it is certainly not due to his perversity.

The example which he gives in support of his contention that independence does not mean lack of relatedness is not very convincing. "As I sit at my desk," he says (p. 158), "there is a certain relation—there are several relations—subsisting between me and a certain apple in my cellar. But surely, none but a very daring idealist would care to assert, as a necessary part of his philosophy, that if one should eat the apple I would cease to exist." Quite so, but it is because it is an apple, with which his relation is only a very trivial one. Suppose instead of the apple, it was his sweetheart or his vocation that was snatched away from him, would it not make a difference to his existence ?

In Chapter XIV the author gives a general outline of his realistic position. He is in favour of calling it "dualistic realism", instead of giving it the name "critical dualism", as he, in company with six others, did before. We do not, however, see why he should think of discarding the name "critical dualism". Practically every realism is a "dualistic realism"; even "epistemological monism" is a dualistic realism, for it is an ontological dualism. There is nothing distinctive about the name "dualistic realism", whereas "critical realism" immediately draws attention to the peculiar standpoint of the author and his friends who collaborated with him in publishing a collective work.

We have so far criticised the author and his standpoint. But we should be failing in our duty if we did not mention the extremely sympathetic, nay almost reverential, attitude of the author towards Indian culture. His deep sympathy with Indian aspirations is also a notable feature of the book. I have especially in mind one passage where the author, speaking of the fields where the self makes itself most vividly plain, gives the example of Indian patriots refusing to taste food and dying of starvation for the sake of an ideal :

"The martyrs of all time, the Irish and Indian patriots of a few years ago, refusing to allow their hungry bodies to taste food until



they die of starvation for the sake of an ideal—things like these make almost ludicrous any attempt to explain human nature out of stimuli and reflexes and associations" (p. 317).

The book is an important contribution to philosophical thought, and its extremely sympathetic attitude towards Indian ideals and aspirations greatly enhances its value for the Indian reader.

S. K. Maitra.

THE HEADQUARTERS OF REALITY: by Edmond Holmes.

Published by Methuen & Co. , London.

Here is a book, under a peculiar title, from a modern writer who has already acquired some reputation for his original contributions to the Western Thought, both philosophical and religious. His name has become somewhat familiar with serious readers from his several works and articles contributed to high-class Journals. The book has the sub-title:—‘A Challenge to Western Thought’, which reminds us of a similar work by Professor Joad, *A Counter-attack from the East*. The two authors represent, in their own way, a reaction to the prevalent Western Thought under influences from the Indian. They appear, however, to have adopted different modes of coming to their conclusive standpoints. At least Prof. Joad’s treatment has no *personal* attitude to defend, as we find in Mr. Holmes’. We are, however, not concerned here with the former writer.

In the book under review the author has attempted, in an open manner, to indicate the reasons for his dissatisfaction with the Western Thought and his indebtedness to the Indian, particularly to the Upanisadic and the Buddhistic, for his present personal convictions. It is always a difficult and delicate affair for a reviewer to do adequate justice to a book in which the writer gives expression to his personal convictions, particularly of a spiritual nature. The situation becomes more so, when the reviewer himself shares in a way the faith of the

author. The only safe course to adopt in such a case is to avoid, as far as possible, all reference to personal matters of faith and conviction, and to express one's opinion with as *objective* an attitude of mind as possible.

The object in view of the author appears to be to attain an acceptable conception of the ultimate nature of reality underlying the universe both on its outer and inner aspects—a conception which may satisfy the intellect as well as offer an ideal which one may consistently pursue in life. So the treatment may be said to be partly metaphysical, partly ethical or religious in its wider sense. But the method he adopts for the purpose is a peculiar one. I do not know of any other writer who has followed this method for a subject of the kind. The author begins at once with a criticism of the Aristotelian Logic and Metaphysics (particularly his Cosmology), as these are supposed to have historically influenced the course of philosophic, and partially religious, thought in the West down from the ancient Greek period, through the mediaeval scholasticism, to the present-day speculations, which are not yet, in his opinion, entirely free from the influence. He notes, no doubt, though rather casually, signs of freedom in the recent scientific thought, but prefers to be silent as to the current philosophical tendencies. The main course of European Thought had no doubt its origin in the Greek, and its development may be said to have been partially influenced by ideas from this source. But it would be, I am afraid, rather too sweeping a judgment to trace everything to Aristotelian influence. However, this may be the personal view of the author who, in his own thought, might have felt the Aristotelian influence at the cost of his mental peace, the result of which was the present reaction towards a source of light which, as he frankly avows, has cleared his vision and offered a solace in life. He in his present thought appears, at least, to have kept clear of the Aristotelian, and what he calls the 'neo-stoic' influence. The author also virtually admits the decline of the influence of Aristotle in modern thought.

Of the influences on the culture of Europe, he particularly mentions, as predominant, the Jewish *supernaturalism* and the Aristotelian *Naturalism*. This no doubt evinces a penetrative insight. The Mediaeval Thought is known to have tried to combine the two in the later development of scholasticism, the prominent representative of this tendency being Thomas Aquinas—the master-mind of the age. It is also known to be the orthodox position of Christian Thought, particularly of the Roman Catholic. But in modern thought, freed

from the influence of the Church, the Naturalism of Aristotle has almost ceased to have any effect. On the contrary, as the author himself points out, the influence of Stoic Naturalism is apparent, particularly in the *Materialism* of the day, which he, therefore, calls *Neo-Stoicism*. It is a question if Stoicism can at all be called naturalistic in any sense, and whether modern materialism is the upshot of its influence. At least, the materialists themselves do not admit it.

Now of the influences from Indian Thought which the author confesses as having shaped his present position. They are, as mentioned by him, particularly two—the *Upanisadic* and the *Buddhistic*. He appears to have carefully, and thoughtfully also, studied the principal Upanisads, not from their original Sanskrit texts, but from their English translations, as presented by Mr. Hume in his work : “The Thirteen Principal Upanisads” ; and his acquaintance with Buddhism appears to be confined to the Pali Texts, also in their English translations, presenting the position of the Southern School—called *Hinayana*. Of the *Mahayana* Buddhism, he does not make any mention. This may have been due to the current view that it does not represent the original Buddhism, which is partially true. However, it does high credit to the author’s intelligent grasp of the underlying thought, though presented in foreign versions. But the earnest reader of them has not, it appears, given much thought to the presence of different strata of thoughts, both philosophical and religious, in the Upanisads themselves. He has rather selected the crowning phase of the thoughts as the fundamental one, namely, the *Idealistic Monism*. This phase must have appealed to his mind and heart, already dissatisfied with the intellectual and religious culture of his own country. But it has to be borne in mind that even this *Monism* has not been adopted exactly in an identical way in the different schools of the *Vedanta*. He has at least, it appears, kept clear of the ultimate issue of the Sankara *Mayavada*, which he interprets in a way partially *realistic*. However, the *Vedanta* of any school was not his ultimate concern. The Upanisadic teachings, as he understands and interprets them, furnish him with only a theoretic basis—a metaphysical background—to his search after a practical ideal of life, which may be an all-satisfying one. With this end in view he goes beyond the Upanisadic speculations, and finds in the teachings of Buddha an inspiring model.

The author does not believe, however, that the two tendencies

are really distinct and absolutely opposed to each other. It is interesting to note how he has reconciled them. The speculative tendencies of the Upanisads are regarded by him as defective in their practical value. The scheme of life based on them is not, he thinks, suitable for common people, though they are of high significance as a theoretic view of the reality underlying the universe. This defect, he holds, was removed by the advent of Buddhism, preaching a religion which may be adopted and lived practically by all, irrespective of their intellectual equipments. Viewed thus, he thinks, the Buddhistic thought is not antagonistic to the Upanisadic, but rather carries on the spirit of the latter to make it suitable in the form of a concrete ideal of life, which common people may pursue. There are no doubt some doctrines common between the two, as they were the prevalent ideas in the culture of the time. But to hold the view that Buddhism was a fulfilment of the Upanisadic position is rather too bold a position, the appreciation of which the present reviewer would rather leave to the keener judgment of his readers.

P. B. Adhikari.

MAN : by Rabindranath Tagore.

Published by the Andhra University, Waltair, 1937.

THIS book, small in size but big in content, embodies three Lectures which the illustrious Poet-Philosopher of India delivered at the Andhra University under the terms of the Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Endowment. It is a wonder that the author could comprise, within the space of three short chapters, his thoughts on a subject, which needed such elaborate treatment in his *Religion of Man* (Hibbert Lectures delivered at the Manchester College, Oxford, 1930). Yet the writer has left nothing obscure in the treatment of the main problems about the true nature of man and his destiny—problems which should be of high interest to all inquisitive minds in an age, perplexed and sceptical about matters spiritual. The book reads like an inspired message and may, in a proper sense, be regarded as a *Bible* for the spiritual guidance of the man of today, fulfilling, as it does, the wide demand for a 'Religion the Age requires'—a Religion that must be free from all historical sanctions and traditional creeds and cults, and at the same time offer a concrete positive ideal suitable

to the time and its prevalent ideas. The truth about the real nature of man, as expounded here, gives a dignity to his life, which is rarely found in the teachings of other religions.

The problem about the true nature of man and his destiny has been a fundamental one in the philosophic thought, both of the West and the East. 'Know thyself' – was a note sung by the sage Socrates of ancient Greece, and has run on in various forms in the history of Western thought down to the present day. The same note, again, is the fundamental basis of Indian Thought, finding expression in different forms, in the course of its development into different systems. But there is a characteristic difference between the two courses of Thought, with rare exceptions. The problem of the nature of human self has been approached in the West mainly from the outer nature, without due regard to the inner. The ultimate consequence of this tendency has been, as we find, a materialistic outlook on life, culminating in the total denial even of the reality of the inner realm of consciousness. In Indian thought, on the contrary, the same problem has been approached, also with rare exceptions, from the inner as furnishing a clue to the outer nature—a tendency which has led ultimately to the monistic position of Shankar Vedanta, to the neglect, even denial, of *true reality* of the outer. But there stands an insistent demand from the outer and the inner both, for a just recognition of their distinctive reality. No true philosophy can safely waive this demand. Its course must lie, therefore, in the choice of a happy mean. The author of the book under review has, with a rare insight, tried to strike out, in his own way, this mean, recognising both in their relative truth, and harmonising, on a higher plane, their true relation. There are statements, at places, of an epistemological nature, which might lead one to think that the author was driving towards an Idealism of the Hegelian or of the Shankara type. But the poet, getting the better of the philosopher, saves the situation. He gives equal heed to the just claims of both, reconciling their demands in a higher synthesis which only a poetic vision can apprehend properly.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that the booklet contains only the inspired sayings of a poet, who has but attempted to record here, in an elegant metaphorical language, his own inner vision—his personal *intuitions*. Intuitions of a high order no doubt there are, as there must be in matters truly spiritual. But they are not mere deliverances of a poetic vision. The deep insight into the true nature of man, viewed widely, and the true significance of human life,

which the writing evinces throughout, has been the result of mature thought, supported by facts of impartial observation and extensive studies. The penetrative analogies, drawn from the wider world of physical and biological sciences, that the author offers by way of illustration of his statements, are no less remarkable. Mere insight or intuition is apt to become *dogmatic* at times, when it does not correspond to human experience, or agree with the discoveries in the scientific field. A true philosopher must no doubt have recourse, at times, to direct vision of truths about reality, as we find in all master-minds of creative thought. But that insight, at the same time, must have adequate support from the wider field of knowledge and experience. This desirable characteristic of a true philosopher is a marked feature running throughout the writing. Here the poet and the philosopher have, as they must be, united into one. Yet it is not a mere poetic vision, with a philosophic discourse thereon, which the author has indulged in for the mere satisfaction of his own intellect or that of others. He has, in his own life, lived his philosophy and realised its vision, as it appears from the writer's own statements in the Preface to his *Religion of Man*. He writes there : "The fact that one theme runs through all only proves to me that the Religion of Man has been growing within my mind as a religious experience and not merely as a philosophic subject. In fact, a large portion of my writings, beginning from the earliest products of my immature youth down to the present time, carry an almost continuous trace of the history of this growth. Today I am made conscious of the fact that the works that I have started and the words that I have uttered are deeply linked by a unity of inspiration whose proper definition has often remained unrevealed to me."

In the above extract the author speaks of his personal experience and realisation. Yet in the present booklet, as in the larger work on the same theme, he does not present any private or personal religion of his own. The *Universal Man* in him speaks to the individual, touching a deep chord within the latter's inner nature and awakening him to a deeper sense of his true personality. Hence what is offered here may be called a new Religion *for* Man. It has, however, nothing essentially in common with the 'Religion of Humanity' of Auguste Comte, the celebrated French Positivist, nor with the merely 'Ethical Religion of Humanity' of the present day, preached in the West, particularly in America. Their outlook on human life does not go beyond man as he is or as he has been made by biological

and social evolution. The perspective of the author, on the contrary, is a far wider one, looking back deeply into the past history of man, both biological and social, and indicating thereby the spiritual possibilities awaiting him in the future. In this perspective, he reads a new meaning into the evolutionary process and offers what may be called a new philosophy of History, which deserves impartial consideration. It may be regarded as one among many hypotheses on the subject. But taking it even as a *hypothesis*, it is worth a wider discussion and criticism than one of the mere scientific type, in view of its deeper significance for the world at large.

The only western Philosopher whose thought may be compared to the author's position is Schopenhauer. But the value of his contribution to the Western thought does not appear to be properly recognised or appreciated as yet in the occident. He is still a *pariah* to the orthodox schools there. One reason for this may be that this philosopher, with his characteristic sincerity of mind, avows himself as being influenced in his thought by the study of the '*Oupanikhat*'—the Upanisads in their Latin translations. The present author, however, quotes texts from far wider original sources, both religious and philosophical, as bearing witness to his own thoughts.

Now, in speaking of these quotations, one question may arise here : how far he has put right interpretation on the texts quoted. The sanskrit quotations, as they stand, might be interpreted differently, as they have actually been by older commentators on the texts. But it has to be borne in mind that these annotators have, to a large extent, put on the texts either "home-made" meanings or ideas derived from the intellectual traditions of the schools or sects to which they severally belonged. Their interpretations do not appear in all cases to be the results of personal realisation. Even supposing they have spoken from such realisations, the mode of realisation is bound to be influenced by the prevailing ideas personal or traditional. The one fact that may be regarded as a unique feature of the early life of the present author is a freedom from traditional influences in his home and personal life. It is no wonder, therefore, that he was able to see a new meaning flashing out in the texts, corresponding to his inner vision, untrammelled by any foreign ideas. Besides, there is a principle about all truths—that no truth reveals itself absolutely in any uniform or 'cut and dried' shape. It is held by an influential school of philosophy in the West: 'Once true, always true'. This is rather taking a truth in the *abstract* ; and the school responsible for the assertion is well-

known for their 'notorious' fondness for abstractions. Truth is *dynamic*, and as such its revelation must appear in concrete forms from time to time. It is thus only that a truth can be of value for life. This is the real sense of the misunderstood *eternity* of truth. Any view about the real nature of man and his destiny must be prescribed in a form to serve as an ideal of life. One important test of its truth must lie in the possible realisation of the ideal offered in the concrete life of man, both individual and social. The author under review has rather been emphatic, as it appears, in pointing out the inestimable value of his ideas in the present circumstances of the world of humanity. This may sound rather as *pragmatic*, an ill-fated term in its current use in the West. But there are values and values. Pragmatism does not, and cannot, eschew the spiritual values of life. The method of treatment of the subject adopted by the author keeps, implicitly at least, the door open for wider realisations of the truth about man. He has enunciated the spirit of it, leaving its further realisation to the future generations seeking the ideal in other possible concrete forms.

P. B. Adhikari.

POPULAR CULTURE IN KARNATAKA: By Masti Venkatesa Iyengar: Printed at the Bangalore Press, Mysore Road, Bangalore City. pp. 163. Price: Rs. 2/8/—.

WHAT is culture? It is an amalgam of the vision, wisdom and work of the man in the street. It is grace writ across all the aspects of his life. Mr. Iyengar defines it as "the people's attitude in life" (p. 9). And his book is an account and analysis of those forces which have shaped that attitude of the people of the Karnataka. It consists, in the main, of the English rendering of a series of four lectures which the author delivered in the vernacular about ten years ago, under the auspices of the Madras University in connection with the latter's "scheme of lectures in the main vernaculars of South India of subjects relating to Oriental Culture".

Though during the last several thousand years the political history of the Karnataka has been marked by many "alarums and excursions", the people through the centuries, have developed the arts of peace, as manifested, for instance, in their *distinct* school of music, style of architecture and technique of thinking in respect of the eternal verities. But it was only after the eleventh century that these ceased to be



a special preserve of the few only. For, thereafter, the itinerant religious preachers made them accessible to, and available for, all, it being felt that there are no caste distinctions in the domain of culture.

These religious teachers or purveyors of culture belonged mostly to two Movements: the Virasaiva Movement initiated by Basavanna and the Haridasa Movement, integrated by Purandardasa, during the twelfth century. Their vehicles were stories and songs, sayings and systems of ethical discipline—all conveyed through the vernacular of the people. It is these, says the author, which constitute the integrating influence in the life of the people till this day, in spite of the influence of Christianity, English Education and Western Civilization since the coming of the British into India.

The breadth of Basavanna's mind and message is indicated in his sayings, some of which are quoted below:—

"He only is wise who trusts in God, and he who serves the servants of God. Cleanliness is heaven, uncleanliness is hell. The pain of God's devotee is God's pain. Man's body is the moving temple of God. Bad conduct is low caste. Good conduct is high caste. There was no one who tortured the body and the mind and touched God's feet".

The effect of the Virasaiva Movement thus was:

"It developed a school of poor priests. It abolished the old priestly class. It adopted the vernacular as the medium for communicating the highest truth to the populace. It gave to woman an important place in religious and social life. It set out with one ideal of realisation for every individual, high and low" (pp. 35-36).

How reminiscent all this is of St. Francis and his Order of the little Brothers in the twelfth century in Europe !

The Haridasa Movement, however, was not so "protestant" in its character. It worked within the pale of orthodoxy, but through its teachings, it helped considerably to slacken the bonds of social custom and religious ceremonial. Its founder was one Narahari Tirapha, but it was Purandaradasa who left an indelible impress of his life and labours on it. He was from the very outset an enemy of what he called "stomach-saintliness". He taught the people:—

"Truth is bathing and fasting and meditation and discipline combined. . . . What we should slay in sacrifice is our bad qualities. . . . Caste is in character. . . . Life is of value only as an opportunity to serve God."

He was a mystic singer who, through his songs, taught the people "to live in the world but in thought of God."

Mr. Iyengar then dwells at some length on the contents of *Anubhavamrita*, or "Nectar of Experience", which is the text-book, so to speak, of the philosophy of the common people. It consists of aphorisms, each in a verse-form of three lines, and proverbs on all sorts of subjects. Here are a few of them:—

"Food is God on earth." "There are no slums in heaven." "The speech of true men is the true sacred stream." "The oil-miller knows not God." "Mud on hand means curds in the mouth." "A mother-in-law is like a donkey, a mother like a pearl." "The buffalo has two horns, pride has eight."

The above appreciation is followed by a chapter on Folksongs, quotations from which show that they are warm with the incidents of the people's life and longings, love and laughter. A chapter on place-names and stories associated with them brings Mr. Iyengar's cultural survey to a close. He concludes his book with an appeal for a preservation of all that is best in the people's heritage of culture from the past and an incorporation into it of new elements, introduced in recent years by our inter-provincial and international contacts.

*Popular Culture in Karnataka*, which has been written with commendable sincerity of purpose, sympathy of understanding and simplicity of style, is a clarion-call to the writers and thinkers of the other provinces to dig deep into the treasures of their own popular cultures and bring up to the world's view pearls of great price.

G. M.

**DIE BOTSCHAFT DES BUDDHA VOM LOTUS DES GUTEN GESETZES:** By Guenther Schulemann ( Herder & Co. G. M. b. H. Verlagsbuchhandlung, Freiburg in Breisgau 1937 ).

UNDER the modest title: Buddha's message of the Saddharma-pundarika, which, in fact, occupies the author through less than one third part of the whole book, Schulemann has attempted, within the brief span of 167 pages, a summary of the history and philosophy of Buddhism, along with an evaluation of its conceptions from the scientific as well as from the Christian point of view. Although the book is thus evidently meant to be a popular presentation of Buddhism and its fundamental philosophical ideas, the author has taken care to provide the serious student of Buddhism with an extensive and well-arranged bibliography, running through the appendix of notes ( pp. 167-196 ) on the various topics, described in the book. A few

important publications, however, seem to have escaped the notice of the author. For example, we may insert Hiuanhsang's "Vijnaptimatratasiddhi", translated by L. de la Vallee Poussin ( Paris 1928-29), in note 73, Rosenberg's "Introduction to the study of Buddhism", (according to material preserved in Japan and China, part I Vocabulary, Tokyo 1916), in note 108, Walleser's Life of Nagarjuna from Tibetan and Chinese sources," ( Asia Major, Hirth Anniversary volume ) in note 53. In note 62 the reference to the Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal was found to be erroneous.

It is both refreshing and interesting to see, that the author, who tries to approach the problems of Indian culture in a spirit of sympathy and understanding, can appreciate the bright side of the Geschichtslosigkeit ( absence of the historical sense ) and Ueberzeitlichkeit ( the supra-temporal attitude ) of the Indian mind, which, according to him, owes its peculiar aptitude for religious thought to these very qualities ( chap. II, pp. 20-21 ). Some may find in this the impropriety of putting the cart before the horse ; all the same it is characteristic of the way in which the author tries to approach the Asiatic mind.

In the last two chapters of the book. viz. XI : Mahayana Buddhism and Christianity, and XII : The Highest Wisdom ?, the author carefully restrains himself from going into polemics over the relative superiority of one religion over another, while maintaining, in a true missionary spirit, that Buddhism can be regarded positively as a precursor of Christianity, as an expression of "deep longing and hope" ( p. 166 ), which attains its own realisation and fulfilment in the very last word in religion: "Thy will be done !" We must hesitate to classify the book among the Christian propagandist literature just because of this restraint and the deep interest, shown by the author in the proper interpretation of Mahayana Buddhism, whose fundamental world-conception he compares and tries to reconcile with the results of modern scientific investigations in one of the really stimulating and suggestive chapters ( X ) of the book.

The Saddharmapundarika, being one of the earliest expositions of the Mahayana philosophy, written specially with a view to make the new idealism as widely acceptable as possible has been rightly regarded as containing the deepest and the finest expression of the universal relativism, propounded by the pioneers of Mahayana. It has been, through centuries, a constant source of inspiration for the Madhyamika trend of thought, which looms large behind all later developments of

the Buddhist and even the early Vedantic philosophy. At the same time, it represents a great literary effort to unify all the divergent tendencies in Buddhism, including the Hinayana, under the shadow, not so much of any one particular philosophical dogma as of a non-metaphysical, purely devotional and uncompromising submission to the spirit of the Buddha, the omniscient, whose mercy is regarded as infinite, tolerance unyielding and solicitude all-pervading. Both these aspects of the "Lotus" have not escaped the notice of the learned author. Yet, we would have welcomed a fuller justice done to them than what has been rather diffidently attempted in the VII. chapter, dealing with the contents of this scripture and their inner significance.

The book may be safely recommended to every student of Oriental thought as an introduction to Buddhism and its outstanding philosophical merit.

V. Gokhale.

1. *Valmiki Ramayana* condensed in the poet's own words. The text in Devanagari and English translation by Prof. P.P. S. Sastri. Foreword by the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co. Madras 1935. Price Re. 1/4.

2. *The Mahabharata*, condensed in the poet's own words by Pandit A. M. Srinivasachariar, translated by Dr. V. Raghavan. Foreword by Prof. S. Radhakrishnan. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co. Madras 1935. Price Re. 1/4.

3. *Srimad Bhagavata*, condensed in the poet's own words by Pandit A. M. Srinivasachariar, translated by Dr. V. Raghavan. Foreword by Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co. Madras 1937. Price Re. 1/4.

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battles against the forces of ignorance and barbarism. Who will not be touched by the tragic fates of Rama and Sita, sacrificing their long and varied lives of suffering and momentary triumph at the altar of the eternal principles of human conduct which they unthinkingly obey in their almost childlike simplicity? It was not theirs to question, 'why', but simply 'to do and die'. The why and the wherefore emerge later, in the times of the Mahabhrata, when men, grown clever and wiser, diplomatic and argumentative, brooding and anxious, are faced with the problems of life and death. The Mahabharata presents, indeed, the vast panorama of Indian life in all its youthful vigour and frailty, when human passions chafe at the chains of morality and dictates of conscience. The good, that was immortal, prevailed. The evil, born of evanescence, withered away. The third great book, the Bhagavata, administers the last consolation to King Parikshit, lying on his death bed, seeking inspiration in the lives of great men of the past and salvation in the surrender of his soul to the eternal mercy of the Divine spirit.

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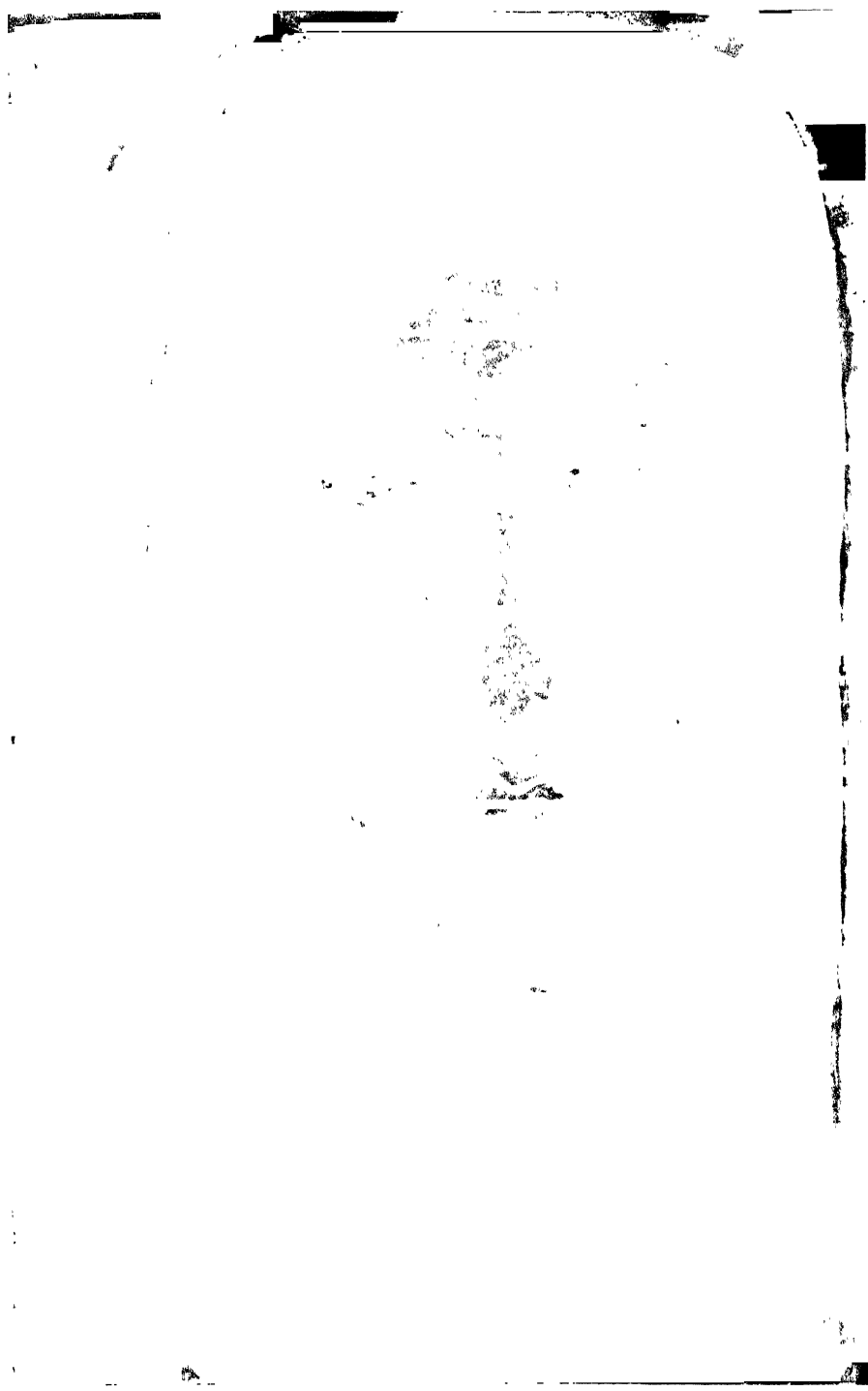
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## ERRATUM

Vol. III, Part 3, p. 289, line 23 & 25 : *read* "critical realism" instead of "critical dualism".







*By Rabindranath Tagore*



# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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February

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1938

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## A FANTASIA ON POETRY

( Chapter from *A Diary of the Five Elements* ) \*

Rabindranath Tagore

"KALIDAS has said in his *Sakuntala*," I was saying or, rather musing aloud, "that beautiful sights and melodious sounds arouse memories in our mind, as of happenings in some former birth—but what such memory recalls, is not clear. As for me, I see no reason why a memory without a definite object may not, as well, be called forgetfulness. No doubt, it would sound queer to talk of arousing forgetfulness ; yet there seems to be something in the idea. Numberless past memories have cast off their bodies, and can no longer be separately recognised. Merged together, they compose the immense sea of oblivion that surrounds the continent of our consciousness. Under the influence of moonbeams, may be, or at the touch of some wandering breeze, waves raised in this sea beat upon the shore of our conscious life, making us sensible of the mystery hidden in its depths, filling our being with the cry of its immemorial, illimitable vastness——"

Khiti could not contain his laughter at this sudden excursion of mine into mystic fantasy. "What's all this, old chap ?" he jeered. "Rein yourself in, for goodness' sake, before you lose control ! Even within the bounds of rhyme and rhythm poetry isn't always welcome, much less so when it's allowed to run over and spoil ordinary prose. Milk mixed with a little water may be tolerated, but a dash of milk in a bowl of water unfits it for drinking. For prosaic people like me, poetry is all the better diluted with a little commonsense ; but I bar prose sprinkled with poesy."

---

\* Translated from the original Bengali by Surondranath Tagore. See footnote under article "Laughter" in Vol. II, Part II of this Journal—*Ed.*

This effectually shut me up. With one unfeeling stroke of his practicality, friend Khiti uprooted the sentiment that had begun to sprout in my mind under the benign sky of that Autumn morning. Sudden interruption by an opponent may not matter much in an argument, but to be thus baulked on the point of taking a flight into the empyrean, leaves one utterly crushed. A budding idea needs sympathy for its development. If it be ridiculed from the very start, Logic is powerless to revive it.

That is why our dramatic artists of old used to begin by humouring their patrons ; sometimes humbling themselves and exalting those on whose response their appeal depended, beseeching them to be like the swan \* that extracts the milk and rejects the water ; at other times, like Bhavabhuti, trying to overcome their audience with a glorification of their own power. Even in the latter case, there came at the end the lament : "What am I to make of a country where glass and diamond fetch the same price ?" The prayer to Brahma was : "For my sins, O four-faced god, punish me as you will, but spare me the fate of having to submit delicate things of beauty to the obtuse"—indeed, a terrible fate !

It would hardly do to pray : "Let the obtuse among men cease to be !" For then the population of the earth would be alarmingly diminished. It is they who carry on the business of the world, who are essential for upholding human society. But for them, public meetings would be impossible, committees fruitless, newspapers dumb, and critics without any *raison d'être*. For them, consequently, I entertain a mighty respect. But because mustard seeds copiously exude oil in a mill, no one expects flowers put in it to yield honey. Wherefore, "O four-faced Brahma, preserve mills for ever by all means, but cast not therein the flowering hearts of Artists !"

Distress never fails to touch Srotaswini who, with a note of concern in her voice, asked : "But why need there be such a gulf between prose and poetry ?"

"They've been advisedly allotted different apartments," I replied. "Poetry is a kind of refuge for our finer feelings. In it they're entrenched behind the invulnerable, yet beautiful, barrier of a language distinct from that of everyone and everyday. Safe within the fortress of verse they're immune from attack. Had I put my inspiration, which I was trying to express, into a poem, no Khiti, yet born, could have ventured to scoff at it !"

Vyom removed the hookah-pipe from his lips. "I'm a monist," he blandly declared, with his eyes still closed. "Prose alone should have

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\* A favourite conceit of the Sanskrit poets was that the duck species are endowed with the faculty of extracting the milk from a mixture of milk and water. *Tr.*

been sufficient for our needs, and poetry had no business to step in to create an unwanted division in our mentality, giving rise to the separate class called poets. Once a clique gets hold of public property, it takes pains to keep off outsiders. So have poets contrived intricacies of language to make of poetry their close preserve. And the skill with which they manipulate it keeps the multitude gaping in wonder ; what's more, such is the bad habit induced in them that, unless rhyming sounds and rhythmic beats keep hammering at the door, their sensibility can't be roused, and ideas have to put off the simple language natural to them, and masquerade in motley, before people's attention can be held. What can be more derogatory for the divine creations of the mind ? The way in which upstart poetry, pluming itself on its later development, goes strutting about, is more than I can stand." With which Vyom, replacing his pipe, lazily puffed away.

Darting a scornful glance at him, Deepti addressed her objection to the rest of us, saying : "What science calls *Natural Selection* applies not only to Nature's progeny, but to the creatures of man's mind as well. Just as ornamental feathers have grown, not on the peahen, but on the peacock, so are the special ornaments that distinguish poetry from prose the outcome of natural causes, not of any artifice on the part of the poets. Is there any country where rhythm is not an appendage of poetic expression ?"

Samir had so long been listening in smiling silence. Something in Deepti's words seemed now to infect him with our contagion. "The glory of man is in his artificiality," was the odd idea he put forward. "No creature but man," he continued, "is privileged to be artificial. The tree hasn't to put on its own foliage, and Nature herself has to paint the peacock's tail. Only man has been taken as an apprentice in God's workshop of creation, and is rewarded according to the skill he can attain. Poetry is indeed artificial, because man's own genius is to a large extent responsible for its make up. It's the creative faculty, incessantly at work in the depths of our being,—absorbing, combining, expressing,—that gives to poetry its glory. Natural language is the babble of streams, the murmur of leaves ; where the human mind is concerned, it demands language of elaborate workmanship."

As Srotaswini listened to Samir with the attentiveness of a school girl, her soft charm was heightened by the glow of an inspiration, which helped her to get rid of her usual hesitation. "Samir has given me an idea," she avowed, "but I don't know whether I'll be able to explain it properly.

"——It's about the wealth of care and skill expended on that part of Creation which has to do with our heart,—I mean, which not merely makes itself known to us, but awakens our love and admiration,—

such as the beauty of flowers, the grandeur of mountains. How entrancingly is each petal shaped and coloured, and the flower poised on its stem ; how magnificently is snow-capped peak placed against the harmonious blue of the firmament ; how gorgeous is the brushwork that lays the colours over the evening horizon. And all this profusion of pose and colour, of drapery and ornament, between earth and sky,— all this wondrous power, this marvellous skill,— has no other effect on man but the winning of his heart. In man's own efforts at creative expression he needs must employ some such diversity of skilled artisanship. If that's to be called artificiality, then the Universe itself is artificial in spending such enormous energy in decorating itself." As she finished, Srotaswini looked diffidently towards me. Her eyes seemed to plead : "I've been talking rubbish — please some one put it into shape."

Before any of us could come to her support, Vyom broke out : "There is a view which looks on all Creation as being artificial. What Srotaswini regards as a message addressed to the heart of man,—sounds, colours, scents, and the rest,—are, in this view, looked upon as *Maya*, figments of man's own illusions. This is not easy to disprove."

Khiti had come to the end of his patience. "You people," he flared up, "will insist on wandering off the point. I thought we were discussing how far verse was helpful in the expression of our thoughts and feelings. But you embark on a voyage across deep waters, only to descend into the quicksands of a theory of Creation and the doctrine of *Maya*. I propose we get back to our subject, in spite of our President !

"—My belief is that metre and euphony were not resorted to as an aid to expression. Children enjoy nursery rhymes, not because they are taken by the sentiments, but simply for their cadence. Likewise man in his primitive stage loved the sound of words apart from their meaning. And so his first attempts at versification were meaningless jingles. Childishness has a way of persisting in some corner of the mature man, so while our grown-up portion develops a taste for meaning and idea, the child in us continues to prefer rhyme and rhythm,—hence Poetry !"

Deepti tossed her head. "The Lord be praised," she exclaimed, "that the whole of us doesn't grow up ! The child in man is what I delight in, —is it not responsible for whatever of sweetness and light we find on earth ?"

"The person," agreed Samir, "who's mature in each and every part, has turned into a prig. He can't bear play or childlike exuberance of any kind. That's what has happened to us modern Hindus. We've become the prime prigs of the world, talking tall, though short in manly stature. It's our failure to realise our own shortcomings that chiefly stands in the way of our improvement. But please do remember, these last remarks

are strictly confidential. The communal temper, nowadays, is none too sweet !”

I felt I wanted my fling. “When roads are being repaired,” I said, “they put up the notice : *Beware of the Steam-roller*. So I warn Khiti, I’m about to get into action. Vapour seems to be the thing he’s most afraid of. But I travel best when propelled by the steam of my imagination. Of course, it’s optional for Khiti to hear me out or not.

“——Motion, I remind you, is bound by strict laws. The pendulum swings in regular beats. The footfalls of man are measured and, moreover, set the pace for the swaying of the rest of his body. There’s a grand metre in the rise and fall of the ocean, and the earth itself marks time as it courses round the sun——”

Vyom unceremoniously wrested the idea from me, to give it a twist of his own. “Motion,” he repeated, “is bound by its laws ; rest,” he went, on, “is alone truly free, established in solemn immobility. And yet the man in the street will have it the other way, taking motion to be free, rest to be bound. The vulgar mind is misled by the seeming freedom of will, and thinks that it consists in moving according to one’s desires. But our wise men knew that desire, which is at the bottom of all human movements, is the origin of our bondage. In order to be free from the bonds of creation, they advise us to cut it at the root, by putting a stop to all voluntary motion of body and mind ----”

Samir gently patted my interrupter on the back. “What you create,” he admonished Vyom, “will be nothing but a commotion, if you keep on cutting short another’s passage like this !”

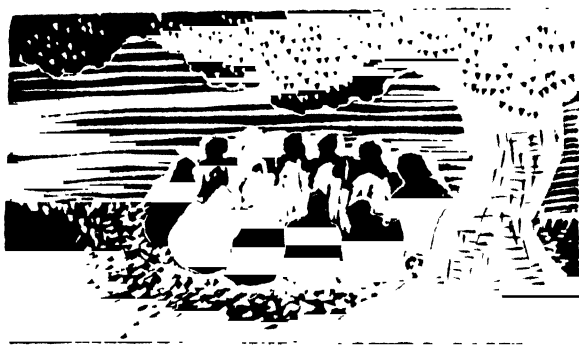
I resumed my broken thread : “It can’t be unknown to our scientific Khiti, that there is intimate relationship between motion and motion, vibration and vibration. If you sound the C note, a string tuned to G responds. The same kind of relation is to be found between waves of light, heat and sound, and of our nerve currents ; for what is our consciousness but an internal state of wave motion that corresponds to the other sets of wave motions comprising the external Universe ? Sounds come and set our nerves a-swinging, light-rays pluck at them with ineffable touches, and the quivering net-work of our nervous system thereupon keeps our individual consciousness constantly alive to the tune of cosmic undulations.

“——Emotions are such vibrations of our heart-strings attuned to all other vibrations, of light and colour and sound. Whence the influence of music is so immediate, so intimate, awakening in us an unnamable desire, which poets call *yearning for the infinite*. That’s a feeling I have myself experienced, and even attempted to describe. The colours of sunrise and



sunset likewise rouse in me the same kind of sympathetic throb in answer to the heart-beats of the Universe. Why only music and colour,— when love fills our heart, are we not taken out of the bondage of our petty selves ? Then does our whole being expand in worship bursting, as a fountain, through the crust of space and time, into the infinite.

“——It’s in their struggle to give voice to this truth that poets have requisitioned all the resources of language at their command. But this the ordinary mind cannot understand, and so complains of their intricacy, their mistiness. Language, after all, is not in direct connection with the heart, but has to find its way through the mind. It’s a messenger, not allowed access to the inmost chamber, which must perforce make its announcement at the threshold, wherefore its message takes so much time and trouble in being properly understood. Such is not the case with music, which can go straight in and embrace the heart. Beauty has the power to convert the ideal into the real. If anything may be called artificial, that is words, not the intimations of beauty they carry.”



## THE EARLIER PHASE OF MODERNIST VERSE

Dr. Amiya Chakravarty

WHEN poetry tries at every step to connect rather than isolate aspects of experience, it must suffer from its suggestibility. Life being full of contradictions and unknown factors, the attempt to make emotion depend upon a rational analysis, when carried too far, would lead the poet into a maze. The reader may well feel that not only has the key been hidden from him but that the poet himself has lost it. The "Metaphysicals" appeared incomprehensible for this reason, though compared to the moderns they were naïf poets, guided more by their feelings than by theory.<sup>1</sup>

Keats, as usual, was sound in his criticism about the "tapestry empyrean";<sup>2</sup> he knew that it could be woven best when the artist chose a vivid experience and invested it with the magic of poetry. But the problem for the young poet to-day, it must be admitted, is complicated. The Modern Age presses upon our lives a multitude of unharmonised elements; a daily paper

1. Dr. Johnson when denouncing Cowley, and the others whom he included in his label did not recognise that there might have been a creative effort behind the apparent unbalance; that metaphors drawn from "twin compasses" (Donne) or "multiplying glasses" (Cowley), sublimities interlocked with Physicians' and Cosmographer's art (Donne), bold assertions about "the amorousness of the harmonious soule" (Donne)—(Donne often depicted "the naked encounter between sensuousness and asceticism" which Bridges denounced in some of Hopkins' poems)—could proceed from a genuine perception of unity, a desire to show the hidden relationship of things in terms of new knowledge. Lovelace, a very sane poet, could not help speaking of "Skilful Minerallists" when singing a love-song; Crashaw used Horoscopes and "Chrystal flesh", and employed chemical analogies to describe the higher ecstasies. These poets were, evidently, led by a pragmatic impulse: intellectual knowledge had to be made significant by an active co-operation of the mind and feelings; the material and the moral had to be *shown* in closer interconnection. To-day this is being done with a more scientific deliberateness; new hypotheses of physics and psychology are being used by the moderns in their scientific medievalism: the old "correspondence" idea is being expressed in text-book terms.

Johnson, however, as a critic-patriarch was justified in warning his contemporaries against the virtuosity of their predecessors: the effect of excessive deliberation on poetry, he knew, could not be beneficial.

2. Keats' letter to Reynolds, Feb. 1818.

"Now it appears to me that almost any Man may, like the spider, spin from his own inwards his own airy Citadel—the points of leaves and twigs on which the spider begins her work are few, and fills the air with a beautiful circuiting. Man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine Web of his Soul, and weave a tapestry empyrean

is a bedlam of unrelated pictures ;<sup>1</sup> the interactions of events, in all fields of modern activity, in finance, economics, politics . . . defy our powers of unravelling. The modern mind is haunted by the interdependence of things ; emotions evoked by the fragmentary experiences of city-life move in a whirl, and the creative imagination, excepting in a finely balanced personality, soon gets tired ; the criterion of inward truth is obscured by the crowded complexity of facts.

The Metaphysicals could take shelter in a few fundamental assumptions ; when the experiences of life seemed chaotic they tried to find a logical reason, but essentially they were at peace with themselves and could rest in reserved areas of belief into which the dissecting mind was not admitted. The modern poet has hardly any reserved areas, though he is trying to create some with the barbed wire of psychological jargon, or of economic doctrine. Life is being psycho-analysed in verse, and consciousness tortured to yield new materials. Modernist poetry, however, proves that as yet no safe anchorages have been found, and both the struggle for new forms of expression, and the character of the literary materials assembled show that the effort to introduce the novel associations and links which lie below consciousness has yet to find its justification. The foundation of belief cannot be established by method and law, or by the analysis of interconnections. In short, something more than a pursuit of the *process* is called for.

Like the Metaphysicals, the moderns sacrifice clarity for the sake of chromatic effect. The sonnet-form, which demands a unity of mood, and a corresponding structural sense, has therefore fallen into disuse, just as it did in the period of the Metaphysicals. Excepting a few poems of Eliot, like

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full of symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wandering, of distinctness for his luxury."

This "luxury" of distinctness it should be the special privilege of a poet to enjoy, but it is sacrificed, with consequent loss for his art, when the poet chooses too many points to tip with the fine web of his soul. Keats not only preached, but rigorously practised the injunctions of his artistic conscience: Mr. M. R. Ridley after quoting this passage in his book asks: "And now what of the way in which the 'tapestry empyrean' is woven?" and shows how Keats kept his intellectual mind and his imagination closely working together. As Keats grew in maturity "he became . . . more and more capable of maintaining at once a high imaginative intensity and that craftsman's exigence which demands 'a brighter word than bright, a fairer word than fair,' and often by some miracle found it" ( pp. 11, 13, *Keats' Craftsmanship* by M. R. Ridley, Oxford, 1933 ).

1. Modernist poets seem to be fond of satirising the newspaper and the inner world of Fleet Street ; the most recent examples occur in Auden's "*The Ascent of F. G.*" ( pp. 48, 49 ) ; in Lord Stagsmantle Auden has created a shrewd caricature of the Journalist Peer.

the *Journey of the Magi*, where due to his self-discipline, poetic form and consistency have been preserved, and poems like Spender's *The Express*, in which the limitations of the subject-matter have not been ignored, few post-war poems of the modernist group can be remembered as individual works of art. Most of the poems of Day Lewis, Spender and Auden seem to run into each other and form a chain of verses, revealing hardly any sense of form, even though much is made these days of the objective reality of "expression". Even when the subject of the poem can be expected to impose a certain logical structure, as in the poem *Time To Dance* by Day Lewis—his two brave pilot friends had a definite ground (or rather air-area) to cover—beginning, and continuing for a time on a fairly high level of poetic journalism, essential to narrative poetry, Day Lewis allows his poetic idea to dissolve into thin air, leaving a feeble smoke-trail in the mind. Often, again, his poem sags, is choked by assortments of thought, as with weeds, and in trying to offer opinions on various problems of the day it reaches nowhere. His *Feathers to Iron* written in immaturity shows greater incoherence because of its mix-up of machine, terminus, child-birth, revolution and what-not; though the meandering, semi-narrative nature of that long poem permitted a cycle of paragraphic structures. *The Magnetic Mountain* shares this quality; it is a more fully developed poem, passages can be isolated from it, and remembered. But both Auden and Day Lewis would rather swim about than walk on the land; their poems offer the kind of aquatic continuity for which one has to go back to the worst excesses of the Metaphysicals.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Auden's earlier poems run into charades, they often demand from the reader the ingenuity of a cross-word puzzle expert, used to the ready handling of reference books, notes and current controversies. *The Orators* is meant to be half nightmare and half psychology,<sup>2</sup> and succeeds in being so. *Paid on Both Sides* was his earliest attempt and its fun appears through a mist. *The Dance of Death* is clearer, but the ideas lack sufficient body, though a large number of characters do a number of needless things. Auden's human interest was, however, from the very beginning real, and the psychological hypotheses to which he is addicted, have had often to yield to the challenge of his vivid reactions to life, and this impulse, allied to a

1. Mr. Yeats in his introduction to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (Nov. 1936) puts it thus:

"They (Mr. Yeats is speaking of the modernist group) may seem obscure, confused, because of their concentrated passion, their interest in associations hitherto untravelled; it is as though their words and rhythms remained gummed to one another instead of separating and falling into order." (P. XXXVI).

2. Some of the poems printed at the end of the book are of a different level.

dramatic sense, has rightly led him to the poetic drama. With an audience in front of his mind, and the requirements of a successful stage performance, he may produce plays which, more than his psycho-politico-metaphysical Dog and/or Man, will not only come out of its unreal Skin, but impress us with its reality.<sup>1</sup>

*Free verse*, in these days, has been widely exploited for lyrical as well as dramatic poetry. But only a conscientious craftsman can justify its use; the Imagists far too often employed it to match the diffuseness of subject matter. Mr. Eliot learning from their experience has achieved fine effects in this medium. Mr. Yeats, claimed by moderns to be a Modernist edition of himself, has never set one foot forward in its forbidden area. There has been much discussion about the heredity of *free verse*; that it is neither the spontaneous creation of this Age, nor the invention of Whitman, is acknowledged.<sup>2</sup> *Samson Agonistes* and *The Strayed Reveller* occur to the mind. The Imagists betrayed their usual confusion of mind when after

1. Auden's newest play "*The Ascent of F 6*", ( published, November, 1936 ) will be referred to in another section.

2. The genesis of *Free Verse* is a subject of much controversy; its limits and basis lie undefined. Robert Bridges in his article on *Free Verse* had no difficulty in showing that freedom in verse cannot mean the absence of restrictions but the acceptance of "some positive quality . . . by which it will be distinguishable from prose" ( p. 37, *A Lecture on Free Verse*, Oxford, 1928 ). The borderline between poetry and prose cannot be drawn as in a map, and yet there is a very real difference,—Bridges speaks of certain fundamental characteristics of verse, such as regular "expectancy" of rhythm and so on. Flint's theory of *cadences* is too indefinite, but then, in spite of his technical training and close acquaintance with French poetry ( which, on the whole, is formal and traditional in spite of the emergence of *Vers Libre* and impulsive experimentation ) he could commit himself to vague statements like this :—"wherever you feel the warmth of human experience and imagination in any writing, there is poetry, whether it is in the form we call prose, or in rhyme and metre, or in the unrhymed cadence . . ." ( from *Introduction to Otherworld—Cadences* by F. S. Flint ).

Osbert Burdett quotes the above in his "Critical Essays" and pertinently asks—surely there is a difference between Shelley in letters and Shelley in poems ? ( P. 17C, *Critical Essays*, Faber & Gwyer, 1925 ). The question of *content* is important, but as Burdett points out, metre and rhyme may not be enough, but the quality of the content too is not enough to make all writing deserve the name of *poetry*, as the term is understood.

In *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* ( by Laura Riding and Robert Graves, 1927 ) the authors remark, "the recent *Vers Libre* movement, a dead movement which tried to coué poetry back into health by depriving it of its crutches" ( p. 145 )—this reflection on the negative side of the *Free Verse* movement is justified. It is true that often dead poetry is bolstered up by rhyme and metre, etc., but the absence of those devices plus emotional fervour will not make good verse, whether free or fettered. Technical analysis of *Free Verse* would prove that successful experiments are based not on denial of the laws of verse-making but on variations of the principles on which it is based.

referring to Arnold's *Philomela* and Henley's *London Voluntaries*<sup>1</sup> they went on to say that *Free Verse* derives also from Dryden's *Threnodia Augustalis*, and Chaucer's *House of Fame*.<sup>2</sup> Browning's and Gerard Hopkins' speech rhythms have added to its vigour; the effect of Owen's internal rhymes is discernible. *Free verse* has indeed come to stay, within strict limits. It is interesting to watch its transformation into *Choruses* in some parts of Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* and Auden's *Dog Beneath the Skin*. The pressure of the "multiple-correspondence" mind has often tortured it out of shape, and it has ended in being used for unending preorations, and since it is clearly unsuited for many kinds of poetry, and can never replace blank-verse, the rhymed lyric, or sonnet, it remains to-day mainly as an evidence of the daring explorations of the modern craftsman rather than of major creative achievement.

1. Osbert Burdett dates Vers Libre in English to Henley's *A Late Lark* *Twitterers in the Quiet Skies*.

2. In the Introduction to *Some Imagist Poets*, 1915.



By Nandalal Bose.

## CHANDALIKA

*A Two-Act Drama\* by Rabindranath Tagore*

### INTRODUCTION

THIS short drama is based on the following Buddhist legend. Ananda, the famous disciple of the Buddha, was one day returning from a visit when he felt thirsty and approaching a well on the way asked for water from a *chandalika* ( a girl belonging to the lowest untouchable caste ). The girl gave him water and fell in love with the beautiful monk. Unable to restrain herself, she made her mother, who knew the art of magic, work her spell on him. The spell proved stronger than Ananda's will and the spell-bound monk presented himself at their house at night ; but, as he saw the girl spread the couch for him, he was overcome with shame and remorse and prayed inwardly to his master to save him. The Buddha heard the prayer and broke the magic spell and Ananda went away, as pure as he came.

This crude plot of the popular tale, showing how the psychic power of the Buddha saves his devotee from the lust of a *chandal* girl, has been transformed by the poet into a psychological drama of intense spiritual conflict. It is not the story of a wicked girl roused to lust by the physical beauty of the monk, but of a very sensitive girl, condemned by her birth to a despised caste, who is suddenly awakened to a consciousness of her full rights as a woman by the humanity of a follower of the Buddha, who accepts water from her hand and teaches her to judge herself, not by the artificial merits that society attaches to the accidents of birth, but by her capacity for love and service in this world.

"If you call the cloud a *chandal*, it does not thereby cease to be what it was. The water it carries does not lose its quality for our earth."

This is a great revelation for her, which she calls a new birth ; for she is washed clean of her self-degradation and rises up a full human being with her right to love and to give. And since her own self is the most she can give, and since none is more worthy of the gift of her surrender than the Bhikkhu who has redeemed, or, as she puts it, created her, she yearns to offer herself to him. But Ananda, detached from all earthly cares and immersed in his inner self, knows nothing of all this and passes by without recognising her.

She is humiliated, wounded in her newly awakened sensibility, and determines to drag the monk from his pride of renunciation to the abjectness of desire for her. She has lost all religious scruple or fear, for she owed nothing to religion save her humiliation.

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\*Translated from the original Bengali by the Editor.



"Religion that insults, debases, binds and blinds, is no religion, though all men had conspired to make it my own. That day I forswore it, and today I fear nothing."

She forces her mother to exercise her art of magic on Ananda. She refers to it as the primeval spell, the spell of the earth, which is far more potent than the immature, "of that day only" *sadhana* of the monks. The "spell of the earth" proves its force and Ananda is dragged to their door, his face distorted with agony and shame. Seeing her redeemer, so noble and resplendent before, thus cruelly transformed and degraded, she is horrified at the selfish and destructive nature of her desire. The hero to whom she yearned to dedicate herself was not this creature, blinded by lust and darkened with shame, but Ananda of the radiant form, who had given her the gift of a new birth and had revealed her own true humanity. In remorse she curses herself and falls at his feet, begging for forgiveness. The mother revokes the spell and willingly pays the price of such revocation, which is death. The *chandali* is thus redeemed for the second time, purged of the pride and egoism that made her forget, that love frees, not possesses.

"*Chandalika*" is a tragedy of self-consciousness overreaching its limit. Self-consciousness, up to a point, is necessary to self-development ; for, without an awareness of the dignity of one's own role or function, one cannot give one's best to the world. Without rights there can be no obligations, and service and virtue when forced become marks of slavery. But self-consciousness, like good wine, easily intoxicates, and it is difficult to control the dose and have just enough of it. Vanity and pride get the upper hand and he who clings to his rights very often trespasses on those of others. This is what happened to the heroine. Prakriti, in her eagerness to give, forgot that Ananda need not take ; her devotion grew so passionate that she could not make her surrender without first possessing. Yet it was inevitable that it should be so ; for a new consciousness after ages of suppression is overpowering and one learns restraint only after suffering. Hence the tragedy. The good mother, who so unwillingly worked the spell to please her importunate daughter, and who so willingly revoked it to save Ananda, dies in the process. The daughter, though chastened and made wise by suffering, has paid a heavy price ; for wisdom is not happiness and renunciation is not fulfilment.

K. K.

## CHANDALIKA

### Act I

Mother. Prakriti ! Prakriti ! Where could she have gone ? She is hardly ever to be found at home.

Prakriti. Here I am, mother, here.

Mother. Where ?

Prakriti. Here, at the well.

Mother. At the well at this time of the day—when the earth is burning furnace-hot under the mid-day sun and water for the day has already been fetched from the well ! All the other maids have long ago gone their way, while you alone sit and melt in the sun for no obvious cause—unless it be to repeat Uma's penance.\*

Prakriti. So it is, mother.

Mother. Good Heavens ! And for whom ?

Prakriti. He who has called me .

Mother. Who has called you ?

Prakriti. His words are ringing in my heart : "Give me water."

Mother. "Give me water !" God grant it was not some one outside our caste who asked for it !

Prakriti. He said he was one of us.

Mother. But did you tell him you were a *chandālīnī* ?

Prakriti. Indeed, I did. But he said, "Do not deceive yourself with names. If you call the cloud a *chandal*, does it cease to be what it was ? Does the water it carries lose its quality for our earth ? Do not defame yourself ; for self-defamation is a greater sin than self-murder even.")

Mother. What nonsense are you talking ? Or is it a mere story imagined of some former birth ?

Prakriti. The story of my new birth.

Mother. New birth ? When did it take place ?

Prakriti. That day, while I was cleaning the little motherless calf at the well in the full blaze of the noonday sun, there came and stood before me a yellow-robed Buddhist monk. He said, "Give me water." Startled I sprang up and did obeisance from a distance. Seeing his resplendent form, made as

\* Uma ( Parvati ) imposed on herself a terrible penance to please Shiva and win from him the boon of becoming his consort.

if of morning light, I murmured, ("I am a daughter of the *chandals* and the water of this well is polluted by our use." He replied, "You and I are of the same human family and all water is sacred that quenches thirst and relieves human need.")

Never had I heard such words before, and with these hands I poured water for him, which before had not dared to touch the dust of his feet.

Mother. You silly girl, how could you dare such sacrilege? Did you forget how low you are born?

Prakriti. The cupful of water that he took from my hands was transformed into an infinite ocean, in which were merged all the seven seas, in which were drowned my family, my caste, my low birth.

Mother. Strange! Even your language is changed. It's not your own. You are under some one's spell. Do you understand your own words?

Prakriti. Was there no water to be had anywhere else in this whole city of Sravasti that he came to this particular well of mine? Why else did he come, mother, if not to bless me with the new life, with the privilege of relieving a human being's thirst? Sure enough, he was seeking an occasion of such a meritorious deed. In no holy place could he have found such water as would fulfil for him his life's sacred mission. (He said, "So did Seeta\* bathe in such water as this, fetched by the Chandal, Guhak, at the very outset of her exile in the forest." Since that moment my heart is dancing to the deep note of that call, "Give me water,—give me water.")

Mother. No, child, I do not like this. These Bhikkhus have an uncanny power of changing other people's minds by words. Today I can hardly understand you, tomorrow perhaps your very face will seem foreign to me. I am baffled.

Prakriti. You have never really known me, mother. He who has shall discover me. For him I wait and keep watch day after day, with my water pot near the well, long after other maids have fetched their water and gone their way.

Mother. Waiting for whom?

Prakriti. For the traveller.

Mother. What traveller will come to you, you crazy girl?

Prakriti. That one traveller, mother, the only one,—though day follows day and he comes not yet. He said no word and yet gave word that he would come—why then does he not keep his word? My heart is burning dry like a desert. It yields no water; for no one asks for it.

Mother. You talk like someone drunk. Tell me plainly what exactly you want.

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\* Consort of Rama, the Aryan hero of the Hindu epic, *Ramayana*, worshipped as one of the incarnations of God.

Prakriti. Him I want, who came unawares and revealed to me that my service too is acceptable. What a wonderful thing to know ! Let him then lift me up from dust, thorn-apple though I be, and place me near his heart.

Mother. Don't forget, Prakriti, that words pleasant to the ear don't become true thereby. You have been born, for an unknown sin, in a caste, whose muddy barrier no iron hammer can break. You are untouchable, and beware of transgressing the narrow limits of prescribed right, lest you contaminate some one.

Prakriti. (*Sings*)

*"Blessed am I," says the flower "who belong to the earth,  
for I serve you, my God, in this my lowly home.*

*Make me forget that I am born of dust,  
for my spirit is free from it.*

*When you bend your eyes upon me  
my petals tremble in joy ;*

*Give me a touch of your feet  
and make me heavenly,*

*For the earth must offer its worship through me."*

Mother. I begin to follow your mind a little. You are a woman and where you love you worship and there you find your kingdom. Caste does not bind woman if fortune blinds man to her caste. And, in fact, such a fortune once did come to you when the prince had strayed here deer-hunting and had offered to take you. Don't you remember ?

Prakriti. Yes I do.

Mother. Why then did you refuse to go with him ? He was blind in love.

Prakriti. Blind, indeed ! Blind to the truth of my humanity. He was out in hunt of an animal and only the animal in me could he appreciate. So he thought of binding me in chains of gold.

Mother. Even though it was as game, he did acknowledge the worth of your form. But this Bhikkhu, how do you think he has acknowledged you—as a woman ?

Prakriti. You won't understand, mother, you won't. I know, that it was he who first acknowledged me. What a miracle it was ! And him I want, shall always want. And to him I must take the worship of my life and offer it at his feet. Nor shall his feet be polluted thereby. I yearn to tell him with pride, "Your devotee I must be, if I am not to remain for ever in the dust as everybody's slave." }

{ Mother. Do not get excited, child. By birth we are slaves and how can one wipe out what providence has ordained ?

Prakriti. Fie, fie, mother. Do not do yourself the wrong of self-defamation. A princess may prove herself a slave, a brahmin a *chandal*. I am neither slave nor *chandal*.

Mother. ( I am no match for you in bandying words. So be it. I shall go to him myself and beg at his feet, saying, "While you go to other houses to accept food, come to ours for a cupful of water only.")

Prakriti. No, no, I will not call him thus from outside, fi I cannot sound my call in his soul. My heart is wrung with a passion to give. Ah, where shall I find him who can take, and so bring about the fulfilment of give-and-take? Will not my longing mingle with his, as the muddy waters of the Jamuna merge in the clear current of the Ganges? When the earth is parched with drought, mother, what will a cupful of water avail? Will not clouds come and spread over the sky, drawn by some invisible attraction?

Mother. What avails this futile talk? If the clouds come not of their own accord and the fields burn dry, what else can we do but gaze helplessly at the sky?

Prakriti. No, not so helplessly. You know the art of magic-spells—that you must work and drag him here.

Mother. Hush, dangerous girl, nor dare to play with fire. Are these Bhikkhus ordinary men that one should risk spells on them? The very thought fills me with fear.

Prakriti. Who dared conceive of spell-binding the king's son?

Mother. I fear not the king, who can at the most put me on the gallows. But they—they never hurt.

Prakriti. I fear nothing—or only one thing, lest I relapse into my abjectness; lest I forget my real self again and be lost in the darkness. That would be worse than death. Drag him here, you must. Is not this very desire of mine a miracle in itself? He himself is the author of this miracle and will work a greater one when he comes here to my side and sits on this rag of mine.

Mother. May be, I can draw him here; but will you be able to stand the ordeal? Nothing of you will remain.

Prakriti. No, nothing shall remain. That is the one claim of mine, hanging heavy on my life, that I should have a chance to give, to pour out my being and be fulfilled thereby. That is the great consummation I have been waiting for, life after life. And hence the great miracle of his words, "Give me water." The world had conspired to make me forget that I *could* give. Now I know and I *shall* give,—give everything I have! And so I wait for him.

Mother. Do you acknowledge no religion?

Prakriti. I acknowledge what acknowledges me. A religion that

insults, debases, binds and blinds, is no religion, though all men had conspired to make it my own. That day I forswore it and today I am fearless. Now chant you that magic-spell and make the Bhikkhu sit by the *chandalini*. He shall be exalted by me; for no better merit could he achieve.

Mother. Do you fear no curse?

Prakriti. A curse has clung to me by birth, which this one shall redeem. I will listen to no excuse, mother. Begin your chant!

Mother. So be it! Tell me then his name.

Prakriti. His name is Ananda.

Mother. Ananda? The Buddha's companion?

Prakriti. Yes, he indeed.

Mother. 'Tis a heinous sin to work a spell on him,—though for love of you I must do it.

Prakriti. Why a sin? To bring him near who brings all near,—what wrong is there in that?

Mother. They draw with virtue, while we drag with spells—as hunters ambush game. It's like churning mud.

Prakriti. So much the better. How else could mud be purified?

Mother (*Apostrophises Ananda*) Thou who art great in soul, forgive my transgression. Thy forgiveness is greater even than my power to wrong. Accept my prostration even as I begin my process of sacrilege.

Prakriti. Why fear you so mother? It's I who work the spell through you. If to pull him by the anguish of my yearning be a wrong, then that wrong I shall do. I will not admit of that dispensation that gives peace but denies solace.

Mother. You are daring, Prakriti.

Prakriti. I, daring? Consider his daring who told me so simply what none had dared to say before—"Give me water." What power was implicit in these simple words to illumine my whole life, to displace from my breast the black load that was crushing me and release the very current of my being! Baseless your fear if you had but seen him. He had finished his round of begging in the city and yet he tramped across the wasteland, past the cremation ground, crossed the river, all in the scorching sun,—for what? Just to say to this poor girl, "Give me water." Such tenderness, such grace showered on this worthless creature! "Give me water!" This water has welled up within me and I must pour it out. "Give me water!" In an instant I was aware of the inexhaustible reservoir within me. To whom shall I give it? That is why I call him night and day. Never mind if he hears not. Chant your spell. He will bear with it.

Mother. Look yonder, Prakriti! There go some yellow-robed monks.

(*From the road come notes of a Buddhist chant*)

Prakriti. See, mother, see, there he goes at the head of the procession. Not once did he look back at the well. Ah, once again he might have said, "Give me water." I thought he never could give me up like this—me who am his own creation. (*She collapses and beats her head on the ground.*) This earth, this earth, this earth alone is yours. Just for an instant he raised you up in light, miserable creature that you are! Could this be called grace?—To sink back into mud and be mixed with it for ever, to be trampled upon by whosoever would.

Mother. Peace, child. Forget it all. It's best they have shattered your moment's illusion. What will not endure, let it vanish as soon as it may.

Prakriti. Illusion? This longing from day to day, this insult from minute to minute, this imprisoned bird in the breast beating its wings in vain, do you call this all an illusion? Can that be a mere dream which wrings every nerve in one's being? And they—they who calmly move along, without attachment, without joy or sorrow, free from all earthly weight, like autumn clouds lightly floating on, are they the only ones not in dream?

Mother. It's too much to see you suffer thus. Rise, rise from the ground. I will drag him hither with the spell, trailing dust. I will break his pride of "I desire not", and make him moan "I want, I want."

Prakriti. Your spell, mother, is primeval. Their *sadhana* is immature, of that day only. They are no match for you, and must be vanquished.

Mother. Where are they bound for?

Prakriti. Bound for? They are bound for nowhere. During the rains they camp and fast for four months, then are off again, none can tell where. They call this being awake.

Mother. You crazy thing, why then are you talking of the spell if they are going far away? How shall I bring him back?

Prakriti. Wherever he goes, he must return. He cannot go too far from your power. He showed no pity, nor shall I. Work your cruellest spell, mother, and fasten his mind in its coils. How can he evade me now?

Mother. Don't be anxious. It won't be in vain. Hold this mirror in your hand and dance. The mirror will reflect what happens to him and therein you will see how far he is exercised.

Prakriti. (*looks into the mirror*) See, mother, the clouds are gathering in the west, tempest clouds. The spell will work. Like dry leaves, his dry meditations will be swept away, his light extinguished, his path plunged in darkness, and he shall be blown hither as a bird in darkness is blown in the courtyard when its nest is broken. I see the lightning flash and the sea surge in foam. Beyond that I see nothing.

Mother. Even now consider. Will you be able to bear it ? For, later, when the intensity rises, to undo the spell would cost me my life. The fire will not subside till it has burnt to ashes the thing it set to burn. Keep that in mind.

Prakriti. What are you afraid of ? He is no ordinary man and will not be easily scorched. Let him pass through the whole fire. I see the fatal end approaching, the stormy union, the bliss of destruction.

## Act II

Prakriti. I can bear no longer. My breast is choked. I will gaze no more in the mirror. Ah, what a whirlwind of fearsome agony is raging on that noble tree ! Will it be uprooted and its pride laid low in the dust ?

Mother. Speak, my child ; even now I may revoke the spell. Indeed, I would, to spare the great soul, though my nerves be shattered in the process and my own life blown out.

Prakriti. Yes, do mother. Stay the spell. It's too much. No, no, no—only a little more. Let him come nearer, let him go through it. And when he comes into my arms, I shall wash down all his suffering with the surrender of my whole being. The fire in my breast will illumine the darkness of his fall and the fountain of my life will bathe and refresh the tired and tortured soul. Once more he shall call, "Give me water", the water that is deep in my being. Till that moment let the spell work.

Mother. I could hardly imagine it would take so long. The spell is nearing its end and my breath is being choked.

Prakriti. Never mind, mother. Go on with it. Only a little more.

Mother. The rainy season is nearing and their period of fasting is at hand.

Prakriti. They are gone to Vaisali.

Mother. But that is so far away ! How pitiless you are !

Prakriti. Not so far. Only seven days' journey. Fifteen days have already passed. He is on the way and with him is coming all that was far away, hidden beyond the sun and the moon, beyond the reach of my hope even. It's coming and my heart is all a-tremble.

Mother. The spell is worked to its utmost. Such force would have brought down even Indra, wielder of the thunderbolt. And still he comes not. What a life-and-death struggle ! What saw you in the mirror ?

Prakriti. I saw the heavens covered over with mist, colourless, like the look of the gods as they lay exhausted after the war with the demons. Here and there the mist was rent by lightning, till layer by layer, the entire sheet of mist was swollen sore and ferocious like a septic ulcer. That day



passed. The next day I saw black clouds piling up, flashing out lightning : and, facing them, I saw him, his every limb caught in flame. I looked and my blood froze. I rushed to you to beg you to stay the spell and found you seated like a log, in trance, breathing deeply and unconscious. It seemed as if a flame was seated deep within you, and hissed and lashed, cobra-like, the flame that was guarding him. I came back to look into the mirror, to find only agony, agony, intolerable agony, settled on his face.

Mother. And could you gaze on it and live ?

Prakriti. The picture of suffering I saw was not only his, but of us both. My own suffering was mingled with his, as copper and gold melt and fuse in a furnace.

Mother. And you looked on without fear ?

Prakriti. I felt what is greater than fear,—felt myself a witness to creation at work, mightier than destruction, yoking fire, hissing and flaming, to its purpose. What was it ? Life or death ? A joy overcame me, born of contemplating the terrible detachment of creation, free of care, of fear, of pity, of sorrow. I could not contain myself, my whole being leapt up in joy like a flame.

Mother. And the Bhikkhu ?

Prakriti. His gaze was fixed on the distance, steadfast like a star, as though wanting to shoot out of himself into infinite space.

Mother. And did he see you dancing before the mirror ?

Prakriti. I blush to think of it. Again and again his eyes shot out red with anger, as though about to curse, but he would stamp out the flaming embers of passion, until passion, like a javelin, rebounded within his soul and was fixed there.

Mother. And you bore through it ?

Prakriti. I was amazed at myself.

Mother. How long will this horror drag on ?

Prakriti. Until my suffering is soothed. How can he be freed so long as I am not ?

Mother. When did you look into the mirror last ?

Prakriti. Yesterday evening. He had passed the lion-gate of Vaisali some days before in darkness,—in secret, it seems, unknown to his fellow-Bhikkhus. After that I see him, sometimes crossing rivers or difficult mountain passes, sometimes trudging along forest paths alone in the night. As days pass, he seems more and more in dream, unmindful of everything, even of the conflict that was within him, his face distorted, his body languorous, his eyes fixed blindly on nothing, as though there was nothing true or false, good or ill, as though nothing had meaning.

Mother. Can you say where he is now ?

Prakriti. Yesterday at sunset he was at the village Patal on the river Upali. The river was turbulent with rains. On the bank was an old *peepul* tree, glimmering with fireflies, beneath which a sacrificial altar was overgrown with moss. He started as he reached that spot, which he recognised as the one where the Buddha had preached to the King Suprabhas. He covered his eyes with his hands. Afraid lest his dream should break there,—afraid of what I might see therein, I flung away the mirror. Nor have I since then dared to take a peep. I keep on hoping and despairing and so the hours have gone by. Now the watchman is calling. It's past midnight. Alas, even this night will be wasted. Mother, hurry, and work the spell more fiercely.

Mother. I am no longer able to, child. The spell is weakening and my strength ebbing.

Prakriti. This weakening won't do, mother ! Don't give up the helm. He has turned his face backwards and, may be, our chain will snap and he will shoot away from my world and be lost to me for ever. Then will begin the bondage of our own dream, our self-delusion as *Chandalinis*. Endure it again, I will not. I beg of you, mother, hurl now your "chant of the earth" and let the paradise of the virtuous tremble.

Mother. Are you prepared for the end ?

Prakriti. I am.

Mother. Then begin your "dance of welcome" while I read my chant before the goddess.

*Prakriti dances, mirror in hand.*

Mother. Prakriti, just look into the mirror again. Has the shadow descended on the altar ? My breast is choking. I can continue no longer.

Prakriti. No, I shall not see. I shall only listen within. I shall only look when he comes himself. Carry on a little longer, mother ! He will come, surely come ! There ! There comes the storm, the storm of his approach, and the earth trembles.

Mother. Coming to curse you, wretched girl. I am nearly done with. My veins are snapping.

Prakriti. Not to curse, not to curse. He comes with lightning to batter down the gate of death and give me the gift of new life.<sup>u</sup> The door is breaking, the walls give way and the great illusion enveloping my life is shattered. My mind trembles with fear while my heart is rocking with joy. Oh my destroyer, my all in all, you have come ! I will seat you on the summit of my degradation and will fashion your throne of my shame, of my fear, of my joy. )

Mother. Look into the mirror. Quick. My time is up.

Prakriti. I am afraid to, mother. His path is nearing the end. What

will he see at the end ? Only myself and nothing else ? Will that make up for this prolonged torture of his ? Only me ? All this arduous, cruel journey—only to end in this ?—in me ?

Mother. Don't delay, heartless girl, Look into the mirror, quick—I can bear it no longer.

Prakriti. ( *Looks into the mirror and flings it away.* ) Stop the spell, mother, stop it. Turn back your spell. Revoke it. Now, now, immediately. Ah, how wicked to have dragged him thus ! Where is gone that radiant, resplendent, that pure, heavenly light, that was on his face ! He comes with a drooping head, faded, worn-out, sunk beneath the load of an awful defeat of the soul. Awful, Awful ! ( *She kicks away the apparatus of magic* ) A wretch am I, a *Chandalini*,—else how could I desecrate this hero thus !

( *Ananda enters* )

Prakriti ( *kneeling* ). You have come, my master, to redeem me. Hence so much suffering, for which forgive me, forgive me. I have dragged you down to earth, else how could you raise me aloft to your heaven ! Oh, you pure one, the earth that clings to your feet is thereby made pure. Blessed are you and ever victorious !

Mother ( *kneeling* ). Blessed are you and ever victorious, O Lord. My sin and my life are both at your feet and are both at an end. ( *She dies* ).

Ananda. ( *chants* )

*Buddho susuddho karuṇāmahāṇavo*

*Yocanta suddhabbaraññalocano /*

*Lokassa pāpapakilesaghātako*

*Vandāmi Buddhāṃ ahamādareṇa taṃ //*<sup>\*</sup>

\* Literally : "I solemnly pay homage to the Enlightened One, who, being most pure, is like an ocean of mercy, and who, being endowed with the vision of the absolute, pure and supreme knowledge, is the destroyer of all sins and sufferings of this world."

## REVOLUTION AND THE SOCIAL ORDER\*

Humayun Kabir

WE all recognise that there are different types of social order in the world, but we accept them as part of the order of nature itself. Like the poor they are always with us and precisely for that reason, they do not evoke in us any of the questionings which their variety and divergence might otherwise have done. And further, it is often thought that the study and analysis of their divergent forms is a matter of theoretical interest alone, for in the reaction against the confident rationalism of the nineteenth century, the modes of modern thought are curiously diffident about the power of reason. The exaltation of the feelings and the enthronement of the unconscious are symptoms of the malady. The emergence of fatalism in the political philosophy of dialectical materialism, perhaps the most characteristic mode of political thought of the century, is a fresh and damaging proof of man's pragmatic distrust in the efficacy of reason for the purposes of practical life.

This tendency to isolate theory from practice has been responsible for most of the ills of human life, for reason and the will must cooperate at every stage for the barest preservation of life. The will may not determine the truths of reason, but it gives to reason its direction and urgency. Reason, on its part, may not control the functionings of the will, but it supplies the content and prescribes the periphery within which the will is to operate. Reason without the will is impotent and the will without reason is blind and empty.

In the realm of social phenomena, this divorce between reason and the will has been disastrous. Social phenomena are always in a state of unstable equilibrium caused by the maladjustment between social order and social content. Social order may be defined as the pattern of relationships that has grown through the interplay of the forces with which the different elements in the social unit are charged. It rests on the distinction of the interests of the different social elements and constitutes an attempt to achieve a harmony among the conflicting interests. Social content may be defined as the sum total of the desires and anticipations, experiences and aspirations, interests and allegiances of the mass of individuals who compose the social group. At its best, the order achieved by any society is a precarious harmony that the slightest redistribution of emphasis among the different

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\* A paper presented to the Indian Philosophical Congress, Nagpur, 1987.

interests might upset. At its worst, the order represents the tyranny of one predominant interest, secure only so long as it can keep in check the balance of growing forces arrayed against it.

This picture is complicated by a fact to which reference has already been made. Because the social order is a growth determined by the interplay of interests within a given framework, there must, from the very nature of the case, be a disharmony between the prevailing order and the social content which it seeks to organise. If we take a cross-section of society at any point of time, the order revealed will be the reflection, not of the prevailing disposition of social interests, but that of the interests of the stage immediately antecedent to it. The social structure and the social content belong to different regions in the order of growth but they are juxtaposed into one another on the same temporal plane.

The disharmony between social order and social content is the motive force behind all social change. In the political field, it explains the discontent and unrest that seek to extend the system of rights till it is coextensive with that of duties. In the field of morality and religion, it seeks to harmonise the conflict of interests within the individual till they coincide with the balance achieved by the social organism as a whole. In the sphere of social relationships, it is responsible for the continuous adjustments that are required for maintaining the dynamic equilibrium of society against the stresses which particular interests impose upon it.

This dynamic conception of society and its order is in all essentials true but the process of growth and change is concealed by several factors incident to the structure of society as such. A perfectly organised social order would immediately respond to the minutest variations in the distribution of emphasis among its several units. A change or development in the social content would in that case be accompanied or neutralised by a corresponding variation in the structure of the social order itself. In a society like that, evolution would be the natural law of growth and the continuity of the social life would be preserved through all changes and variations.

This, however, is an ideal and serves only to prescribe the ends towards which social activity ought to be directed. In actual life, societies represent an unstable equilibrium achieved by the interplay of interests at any particular point of time. This instability is based on the imperfect organisation of the forces which in their struggle and cooperation determine the structure of human society. The fusion of the conflicting interests is incomplete and this reveals itself in the different elasticities of variation which characterise the different social orders. To put it in other terms, the power of adjustment

and growth varies from society to society, but in no case is this power equivalent to the demands made by the incessant metabolism which characterises all living societies.

A social form must, therefore, from its very nature make for rigidity and permanence. Form is the universal aspect imbedded in the nature of a particular and is impervious to the alterations in its particularity so long as these alterations do not negate the universal imbedded in it. When such negation takes place, we are faced with a metamorphosis which seems abrupt and discontinuous, and we call it a revolution, but it is a revolution to us only because we cannot translate into our conceptual patterns the continuity of alterations made possible by the contingency of the mere particular. This law of inertia of social forms, we may call it the conservation of natural forces if we like, is, then, the first factor which conceals and, what is worse, opposes the continual alterations going on within the social organism.

The second factor, though distinct from, is closely connected with it. We have seen that all social forms exhibit an elasticity of variation that is less than unity, and this relative inelasticity is due to an imperfect fusion of the different interests which together constitute the social group. This imperfect organisation entails that some of the interests within society are weighted as against the others, and consequently the preservation of that particular form of social order becomes identified with the group interests of a particular element within that society. Some elements of the social content thus secure a position of privilege and the guarantee of their privilege is tied up with the maintenance of the social order in that particular form.

These two factors, the intrinsic inertia of all forms and the identification of the interests of society with those of a particular group within it, tend to increase the resistance of the social order to the pressure exerted upon it by alterations in the nature of the social content. Social content may change, not only through the process of time and the consequent accumulation of new experiences, but also through subtle alterations in the disposition and relationship of the elements within it. Like the slightest change of tone which yet makes all the difference in the atmosphere of a landscape, the slightest variation in the emphasis upon the different elements of the social content transforms it almost beyond recognition. The danger lies in the rigidity of the social order which may fail to adjust itself in time and the factors which enhance its rigidity are to be regarded as reactionary precisely because they increase this risk. Instead of being a dynamic equilibrium of conflicting forces, social order would then become a formula or pattern to impose its uniformity upon the multiform factors which are comprised in it. The result would be a growing tension between the rigid and static social form and the repressed and submerged elements of the social content till these gathered

sufficient energy to compel a violent overthrow of the prevailing social order. There would be an explosive social revolution, and it would destroy not merely those aspects of the social order which make for rigidity and oppose timely adjustment to the shifting emphases of the diverse elements of the social content, but it would also in the general upheaval very likely destroy many of the acknowledged values in the structure of the superceded system.

The disadvantages of such violent revolution are threefold. The concentrated energy of the repressed elements might, under certain conceivable circumstances, destroy not only the repressive elements of the social order, but in this revolt against particular values, destroy the social order itself and along with it all the values for which society stands. A revolution may perhaps at times destroy an equilibrium which is becoming oppressive and substitute in its place a new harmony at a higher level, but we must not forget that there is also the possibility that the disruptive forces which it unleashes may destroy all equilibrium, and make of society a chaos which would be the end, at least for the time being, of human civilisation and culture.

Even if all values are not destroyed, there is no guarantee that the revolution *must* set up a harmony of values which is more comprehensive and satisfying than the one it supercedes. In most cases, this, no doubt will be the tendency, for the tension which provokes the outburst will not be released till some more satisfactory equilibrium is established among the conflicting forces. But against this we must remember that the motive force of the revolution will be supplied by some interest or interests that have been repressed in the past, and, in the natural course of events, these interests would seek for and perhaps secure a compensation for the comparative neglect and restraint from which they have suffered in the past. There will consequently be a very real danger that the new equilibrium will emphasise the forces formerly repressed and repress those which had the freest play in the old regime, and thus re-create, though inversely, the conditions which led to the last revolution. In other words, the harmony achieved will again be a onesided and incomplete harmony, and hold within itself the certainty of fresh upheavals. Revolutions, almost without exception, breed new revolutions, and those who take to the sword shall, through the logic of events, perish by the sword.

All this is on the assumption that the revolution will succeed, but there is no such guarantee inherent in the very nature of things. And an unsuccessful revolution, instead of releasing the strain through a more satisfactory alignment of forces, is more likely to lead to acuter repression for driving underground the forces that seek free play and thus insure the occurrence of a future and more violent explosion.

Whether the revolution succeed or not, there is further the element of

human suffering and misery which is an inevitable feature of any disruption of social harmony. Pain in itself is never good, even though it may be that it has at times a cathartic value which compensates for its intrinsic evil. If an end is in itself supremely desirable, and if that end can be achieved only through the intermediation of pain, we may accept it as a necessary corollary to the attainment of that ideal. We must, however, be sure that there is *no* other way, and even then, it is some thing to be suffered only for the sake of the good to which it ultimately leads.

The aim of an enlightened policy should therefore be the creation of conditions in which revolutionary changes may take place without the need of a violent disruption in the continuity of social life. The maladjustment between social form and social content inherent in the nature of the social organism makes revolutionary changes inevitable. The only question is whether the elasticity of the social form can be heightened to respond to the changes in the social content with sufficient rapidity and sensitiveness to avert the necessity of an explosive outburst. Two of the factors which enhance the resistance of the social order to the pressure of altered circumstances and largely contribute to the discontinuity and abruptness of violent upheavals have already been noticed, but this is perhaps the proper stage to derive a conclusion which is implicit in both of them. The intrinsic inertia of all forms may, from the point of view of pure theoretical interest, be regarded as uniform in respect of all its instances, but as soon as we transcend the merely theoretical point of view and analyse it in its relevance to the purposes of practical life, we shall realise that *this inertia is in effect a function of the vested interests* which govern the temper of any particular social organisation. The identification of the interests of society with those of a particular group within it ensures that that particular group will fight to the last for the maintenance of the status quo and the logical corollary is that a society based on the fact of distinct interests is bound to resist the impulse to alteration with all its might. Of all types of social order, that based on the distinction of classes is therefore the most rigid and inelastic and the risks of violent and revolutionary upheavals are the greatest in its case. Conversely, a classless society offers perhaps the only instance in which the elasticity of variation can approach sufficiently close to unity to avoid the necessity of abrupt and discontinuous change in the face of continuous alterations in the social content.

It is perhaps not necessary to labour the point, but one example may suffice to show how insidious are the ways in which the vested interests defend the social order which guarantees them their privilege. Inertia of social forms is, as we have seen, a function of vested interests, but the relationship is never revealed in its naked form. The privileged groups have a



dominant interest in the social life and very largely determine the presuppositions which colour the mentality of the age, The preservation of the social order in its prevalent form is thus represented as a good, not for the privileged groups alone, but for society at large. In fact the privileged classes are themselves the products of the conditions which place them in a position of vantage, and hence they are generally unaware that in speaking of the social good, they are merely voicing the demands of the interest which they represent. Even the interests which are ignored or repressed are persuaded, at least for a time, that their neglect or restraint is in the best interests of the social whole. The tendency is to exalt status and not function, and in this way supply each stratum in the social organisation with a motive for the maintenance of the existing order. In the sequel, the ossification of the social form can only lead to violent upheavals for effecting changes which a more elastic society might have achieved with hardly any disturbance.

The conclusion of all this is that only a classless society can guarantee the preservation of the social heritage, but to achieve a classless society is itself a problem that must first be solved. Our empirical thinking is governed by the categories imposed by the social form into which we are born, and inductive generalisation based merely on the experience of the past is not by itself adequate to serve our needs. We must transcend the mentality of the age and attempt to comprehend the dynamic equilibrium in which different factors are charged only with their own intrinsic potency. This cannot be done so long as we conform to ways of social thinking which have evolved, as in present day society, out of the interplay of forces in which some are weighted as against the others. The function of social philosophy at any stage is therefore the criticism of the prevalent forms of society on the basis of the concept of a perfect and elastic social equilibrium. The accumulated experience of social forms of the past may contribute to the enunciation of such a concept, but the concept must none the less be *a priori*, for it is this concept alone through which we can explain social change. Theoretical reflection and analysis must reveal the disastrous consequences which result from the maladjustment of the social form and the social content and if the realisation is sufficiently acute, it may lead to a fusion of theoretical reason and the practical will. Social philosophy must therefore never abandon its task of criticising the empirical from the standpoint of the *a priori*, of the particular form of society from the point of view of the ideal social form. In this alone there lies a hope that the revolutionary changes which must be carried through before the elasticity of society may reflect the continuity of changes going on in the social content can be effected without the violent and abrupt upheavals which have been the instruments of change in the history of our race.

## THE TAJ MAHAL\*

Satish Chandra Roy

( *A Translation* )

No ! This is not a tomb of marble,—never, never !  
My heart cries out it is a dome of heavenly flowers :  
Snow-white flowers have blossomed on a tree of Paradise,  
A massy heap of them has thus upreared its beauty.  
—This is not a tomb of marble,—never, never !

A heap of flowers—they fell to earth from heaven  
And now gleam white on the blue breast of Jumna.  
By a touch from falling flowers Mumtaz has died :  
Their breath has quenched the light of her dear life,  
—And flowers from heaven have fallen where she lies in death.

What time the white-robed Rishi crossed the moonlit sky  
Mumtaz, by Shah Jahan's side, heard his rapt music.  
She dreamt a dream on that last festival of love,  
—While the Rishi's lute was heard in the sky of the full moon.

There came to her listening ear the sound of rippling Jumna,  
And she longed that the night should never have its dawn.  
From the Rishi's lute fell down, answering her heart's desire,  
Death's emblem, a flower wreath, sent to the beloved.  
—For her that moonlit night had never a dawn.

On her dear, dead face the dream of happiness  
Blossomed fair and white as the crescent moon :  
Her eyes, seen through a mist of tears, shone brightly :  
She smiled in death, while hearts around were breaking.  
—That dream of happiness still blossomed in her eyes.

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\* This poem was written in Bengali by one of the most brilliant of our young teachers at the asrama in its early days. Twenty-five years ago, Willio Pearson gave me a literal translation which he had made, and I tried to capture the spirit of it in English blank verse. It was published, I think, in the London 'Nation', but I have revised it since.  
C. F. Andrews.

Her smile was bright as were the heavenly flowers  
Showered down from Parijat and Mander trees  
By angel hands, ruffling the quiet Jumna :  
Blue Jumna felt the white gleam touch her waters.  
—Her smile was bright as snowy flowers of Paradise.

Did the King bring marble quarried from the hard hills  
To build his Queen a tomb all white and dazzling ?  
I, at least, have seen no tomb of marble.  
Yet many, in the day-glare, see and praise it.  
—But I have never seen a tomb of marble.

Dust rises : overhead the sun glows burning,  
The peasant ploughs rending the stubborn earth,  
Jumna with dried up stream winds slowly on,  
Wearily, yonder, men and women come and go,  
—Through sand wastes Jumna's stream winds slowly on.

But in the day-glare I have never seen it,—  
A tomb of quarried marble, hard and glittering.  
To-night the air is steeped in moonlight sandal-scented.  
The half-moon bending low describes a blossomy whiteness  
—Like the Queen's smile—on Jumna's blue breast floating.

That have I seen—that snow-white heap of flowers.  
Beautiful, it is bathed in the sweet laughing waters,  
And in my heart the Rishi's lute is sounding,  
The glory of it all tonight—for aye—is with me.  
—That I have seen that dome of snow-white flowers.

No ! This is not a tomb of marble, never, never !  
My heart cries out, it is a dome of heavenly flowers,  
Snow-white flowers that blossom on the trees of Paradise  
Have shed their beauty to enshrine Mumtaz.

## BORODADA

C. F. Andrews

WHEN I came back to Santiniketan last December, I was asked whether I had seen Sudhakanta's article on Borodada,\* which had been translated by Surendranath Tagore. Naturally I was very eager to read it, and after it had been shown to me the request was made that I should comment upon it, and also give any further stories which might remain in my own recollection.

Let me begin by saying that this earlier article by Sudhakanta is wonderfully true and life-like. It at once brought back to memory well known scenes which I had witnessed, but had half forgotten. Thus it was a great pleasure to me to go through it. But it has made my own task all the more difficult ; for I shall now be giving skimmed milk to those who have already enjoyed a rich diet of cream ! He has skimmed off already some of the very best stories,—such as the squirrels feeding out of his own plate and getting up his wide sleeves. Nevertheless, much still remains to be told and it is a fascinating amusement and also a pleasure to sit down at the table here in Santiniketan and begin to do so.

Borodada was always a fiery patriot, yet of a very peculiar type. There used to be a regular thunderstorm when he heard of any insult that had been offered to his own country ; but later on he would remember that it was his duty to love his neighbour as himself—even his foreign neighbour—and the storm would soon break into sunshine again, as he smoked his hubble-bubble and breathed content.

Not merely about the wicked foreigner, who robbed his country, would such storms arise, but also about his own fellow countrymen themselves, especially if they belonged to the present generation. For Borodada was at all times a '*Laudator temporis acti*'—an upholder of the past against the present. The deeds of the present generation were all 'bosh'—a favourite Borodadian word, of which there must surely be some Bengali equivalent. This great word 'Bosh' used to come out suddenly and explosively, and then a shout of laughter would follow.

No one could ever laugh like Borodada ! It seemed to shake the universe and sometimes went on reverberating for quite a long while, ending in a sigh of content. His laughter had what modern psycho-analysts call an

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\* The article referred to appeared in Vol II, part IV of *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*. Borodada was Dwijendranath Tagore, the eminent philosopher and the eldest brother of Rabindranath Tagore. In Bengali the eldest brother is called *Borodada—Ed.*

'escape' value. It let off some of his pent-up feelings. After it was all over, his eyes would still sparkle with fun ; he would take two or three long pulls at his hookah and settle himself back comfortably in his chair with infinite ease, until some fresh subject arose to incur his transitory displeasure.

But I must get back to his patriotism and its peculiarities. He had *wholly* annexed Shakespeare, Scott, and Dickens,—these were not 'foreign' at all ! They belonged to the Bengal of his own early days and were infinitely superior to any thing written in modern times either in English or Bengali ! Indeed this modern stuff ( with the exception of his youngest brother, Rabi's writings ) was unreadable. To put any living author on a level with his three heroes was all nonsense,—another favourite epithet with Borodada.

In the same way, Kant was the very last word in philosophy. One day, I mentioned some critic of Kant, who happened to be born in India. At once I found that I had trodden on dangerous ground and had the due reward for my temerity.

"*That man !*" he almost shouted. "*That fellow ! That fellow !*"—his voice rose in a crescendo—"He criticise Kant ! He ! Why he can't even understand him !"—which was probably quite correct.

But all these peculiarities vanished at the advent of Mahatma Gandhi. Here, his patriotism had unlimited scope and there was no 'modern' complex to interfere with Borodada's entire satisfaction.

When Mahatmajī had gone to London from South Africa in 1914 he had requested me by cable to make arrangements for those boys who had lived with him there at Phoenix. They were coming to India under the charge of Maganlal Gandhi, his nephew. Gurudev at once gave them the warmest welcome to Santiniketan, and they stayed with us very happily indeed for several months sharing the life of the Ashram.

Gurudev himself was living at "Dehāli," and he offered them quarters near to it in the quadrangle which was then called "Nūton Baḡi". They were eighteen in number, and some of them were very young indeed. Maganlal acted as 'house-father' of the whole family. These Phoenix boys used to impress the minds of our own students by their amazing industry and their eagerness to do hard field labour every day as a part of their school studies.

A plot of ground was given up for this purpose just in front of the place where they were living and they sowed it with potatoes, watering it from the well. But the white ants, alas ! devoured the whole crop. Gurudev used to keep a kindly oversight over them from his upper room, where he occupied a very tiny space, hardly big enough to hold his cot with its mosquito net. He loved them as his own children, and gave much of

his time to their development, and they had a deep reverence and love for him in return.

It had already become a habit with me to spend the earlier part of every evening with Borodada, after his work for the day was over,—just at the time when he was getting ready for his meal. One evening, after their arrival, I told him about our new visitors and his excitement was intense !

Now Borodada could never wait a single minute if he wanted any thing ! So Munishwar\* was sent off post-haste to get Maganlal Gandhi at once to come and see him. Munishwar, however, was not quite quick enough. I could see Borodada getting terribly impatient, when Munishwar did not return that very minute. So I ran to search for Maganlal and found him. As soon as he came to the verandah, the story of South Africa had to be told afresh by Maganlal himself. Borodada's eyes gleamed while he questioned him about the march of the "ragged army" ( as it was called ) of thousands of indentured labourers, with Mahatma Gandhi at their head, across the Drakenberg Mountains, into the Transvaal,—there to be arrested and sent to prison.

While I watched Borodada's face, as he heard the story, he seemed to have grown quite young again in his enthusiasm, and the flaming fire of youth was in his eyes. He was always an incorrigible romantic ! His life had been lived so quietly and peacefully, that romance, either in his own poems or in his favourite English books, was the one outlet for the emotion which was pent up within him ready to break forth. He *lived* in the stories of these favourite authors, and he would almost devour the most exciting plays of Shakespeare, or novels of Scott and Dickens. Don Quixote and the Arabian Nights also on this account shared his approval.

Here then, as Maganlal told it, was a romance, not about the Scottish Highlands, but concerning his own people and the leader of his people, Mahatma Gandhi ! And here was Maganlal Gandhi, the nephew of Gandhi himself, on the spot, telling him this romantic story, much more incredibly fascinating than any novel !

Each evening, after that, he would ask me to inform him in detail how they were getting on. But this was not enough. He wanted to make a journey to see them !

Borodada had a rickshaw—his one means of conveyance. Very soon, I found that he had insisted on going out in it in order to make certain that these guests of the Ashram, from South Africa, were getting all they required. Were they quite comfortable ? he asked. Had they everything they needed ? When the answer was in the affirmative, and they had all

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\* Borodada's personal attendant, still living.—Ed.

come out to receive his blessing, then another thought came into his mind. He ordered his rickshaw to be taken to the house where his eldest son, Dipu, lived on the ground floor of the central building. He told Dipu to send out and get some sweetmeats for these Phoenix boys in order to give them a treat. Then he went back to his mid-day meal and siesta, entirely happy and content !

But it was when Mahatmaji himself came that Borodada's enthusiasm reached its highest pitch. Never had such an Indian patriot, who had borne unspeakable suffering for his country, come so close into the very centre of Borodada's life of retirement at "Nichu Bangla" before ! So, for days beforehand, he would look forward to this visit ; and every evening, as he pulled at his hookah, he would ask me to tell him over again the whole story of the South African struggle.

I must not go on further to describe how the meeting itself took place. Such scenes are sacred. But what I can tell is that Mahatmaji in every respect came up to Borodada's fullest expectation ; and from that day forward a friendship was formed between them that was never broken. From time to time, with infinite care, Borodada, in his own hand-writing, on a minute piece of paper, would inscribe a letter to Mahatma Gandhi whenever anything was very specially on his mind. At such times I was always called in, before the letter was posted, in order to read over for criticism what he was intending to send ; for Borodada was always very diffident about his powers of writing English, though he had no need to be anxious at all ; for his choice of words was admirable.

While I was reading through what he had written, he would remain evidently very nervous. Then, when I praised him, he burst out laughing like a school boy who has escaped punishment. It was a sign of relief that his irksome task was successfully concluded. One last thing was needed to complete the performance. The letter had to be taken to the post office by Munishwar and carefully registered, before it was despatched.

It was impossible to tell beforehand when these sudden impulses to write would come, and he would never tell me when he was writing or let me help him. But the moment the deed was accomplished, Munishwar would come to call me in a great flurry ; for Borodada could not wait even five minutes. So when I saw Munishwar running towards my room, I would come out at once, and then Munishwar, as soon as he saw that I was actually on my way, would run back again to tell Borodada that I was coming. Needless to add, these 'love letters' ( as Bapuji used to call them ) were very precious, and they were most carefully cherished.

When I was away from Borodada I used to write frequently and always told him that I expected no answer. Nevertheless, he would often

send me a reply in a tiny envelope. Not seldom, on opening it, I would find it to be in rhyme ! When I got back to the Ashram, we used to have great fun together over his rhyming propensity in English. He would begin, "Oh, Charlie dear, I wish you were here," and carry it on half down the page. After that he would drop into sober English prose, which was less difficult for him to manage.

He would speak of the Bhagavad Gita with the deepest reverence. This Sanskrit book and the Upanishads had a value for him that no other books in the world possessed. During the years before his death, his own commentary on the Gita absorbed most of his time and attention. His paper box-making and his Bengali shorthand, which Sudhakanta has rightly mentioned, were merely his amusement. These were to while away the time ; but his Gita Commentary was quite different. It was his *magnum opus* ; and he took infinite pains about every word of it.

When he came to any questionable interpretation or textual difficulty, he would send for Sastri Mahashya ;\* and the two would sit for hours together. Meals were altogether neglected until the point was settled. Sometimes the discussion would go on right up to the time when I was expected. Munishwar would lie in wait and give me a nod, or a hint, and I would go away. Sometimes I would call twice or thrice, but the discussion would still go on. The next day Borodada would be very apologetic ; for he had learnt from Munishwar that I had called. But I would tell him that his book was far more important than anything else and this would ease his mind.

The publishing of the book and the correcting of the proof sheets tried him beyond words. Again and again the proof would have to be sent back for further correction. Then, at the last minute, some further point would occur to him, which had at all costs to be introduced. The printing bill mounted up, but nothing short of perfection was Borodada's literary standard ! It was the same with any article for *Prabasi* ;† but Ramananda Babu would go to any amount of trouble in order to please Borodada.

On many occasions, in the quiet of the evening, Borodada would talk to me on the highest themes of all. His voice would always sink low in reverence when he mentioned his father, Maharshi. He was very touchingly humble and truthful about his own religious experience. Thus, he would tell me that he had only once or twice, in all his long life,

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\* Pandit Vīdhushekhara Bhattacharya, an eminent Sanskrit savant, who was at that time the Principal of the Research School at Santiniketan.—*Ed.*

† A well-known Bengali monthly, edited by S. J. Ramananda Chatterjee.—*Ed.*



been aware and conscious of the Divine Presence in that deep mystical sense, that his father, Maharshi, knew so well and had so often realised to the full. He did not claim himself to be a mystic, though his faith in God had never failed him. Prayer and meditation meant everything to him especially in the hour of trial and bereavement.

"When I lie awake," he said to me once, "and when I try to keep my spirit calm and still, there often comes to me some word of comfort, especially from the ancient scriptures of religion. This gives me rest and peace."

He had found such words in the sayings of Jesus as well as in the Gita itself. Once I asked him which were his favourite texts from the Gospels. He repeated with awe the two words of Christ, "The Kingdom of God is within you" and "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." I ventured to mention a third which he had spoken about to me on a previous occasion. It was this: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." He little thought that I had his own child-like, simple-hearted character in mind when bringing this forward. But so it was in truth.

He was very troubled at times, whenever he found he had suddenly lost his self-control, or when he thought he had been too harsh and had given some offence. As soon as he realised what he had done, he could not bear it. Either Munishwar must immediately get his rickshaw and he must go and make amends, or else one of his little notes would be sent round while he waited with impatience. Once this happened in my own case, though I was quite unaware that he thought he had hurt me. The moment his note came, I ran at once all the way as fast as ever I could to tell him that it was entirely imaginary and that he must have been having a very bad dream or nightmare, if he ever thought that any word that he could utter would offend me. Then, as he realised with intense relief that it was all a mistake, he gave one of his shouts of 'Homeric' laughter and it was all forgotten.

Only one more story can be told. It is the tale of Borodada's great adventure, which happened thus! His two brothers, Satyen and Jatin, were at Ranchi, and his longing to see them had become almost unbearable. So he took me into his confidence and asked me to arrange for him some means whereby he might make the journey to Ranchi and pay them both a visit! But this was to be done *without going to Calcutta*. We had to get, he said, to Ranchi by some other route!

A cross-country journey by Indian branch railway lines is no joke at any time; but with Borodada, who was a recluse and used to clock-like habits, it seemed almost out of the question. So I pointed out that it would be ever so much easier to go straight to Howrah Station and from there take

the Ranchi Express. But that would not satisfy him. At last, I worked out a cross-country railway journey via Burdwan, Asansol, and Adra Junction. The difficulties were even greater than I thought. Never shall I forget the horror, when we arrived late at Asansol and the train on the furthest platform was just ready to start ! The luggage, and Munishwar, and Borodada himself had to be hurried over the long railway bridge to the other side. When we had barely managed it, we sank down in the reserved compartment and the train was off !

But instead of being exhausted by our hurried change from one train to another, Borodada was as happy as a school boy who was out on a holiday excursion. Nevertheless, when at last we reached the house at Ranchi, where his two brothers, Satyen and Jatin, were waiting to meet him, the excitement of it all nearly brought with it a collapse. But he quickly recovered, and I left him, along with his faithful Munishwar, and went back to Santiniketan.

It was not many days, however, before he summoned me again, and the journey had to be repeated, back from Ranchi to Bolpur. The one great longing of his heart had been fulfilled, and now he wished to be back once more on his beloved verandah, with his friends the squirrels and the *minahs*, and his books and papers, where everything could be methodically arranged and life could be wound up like a clock. The very next morning after his return, he rose at the usual time and began once more his normal life, walking round the garden, counting every step until his physical exercise was finished, taking his cold bath at the exact time, feeding the squirrels from his own plate, and continuing to revise his Bengali Shorthand. That trip to Ranchi was Borodada's last entirely satisfying romance !

## WITH JADE-WHITE PETALS

For the moon-pale feet of Laelia the still night sheddeth dew,  
Or at noon in the white-rose garden—domed with a trance of blue—  
Blossoms with petals before her feet are shed  
And fall from the dreaming rose-trees with never a leaf of red.

The foam-pale hands of Laelia that weave my web of dream,—  
How they pluck white water-lilies afloat on a languid stream,  
And how from the strings of a zither they slowly waken a strain  
Lustrously pale as the starlight when the air has been washed by the rain.

In a moth-like silence I gather blooms of the night for her brow ;  
As in a shrine men proffer trophies with prayer and vow,  
I would weave a crown of whiteness, a glimmer in the dream-charged air,  
And raise it in suppliant hands to the dim darkness of her hair.

Your name is fading music upon my worship's mouth ;  
It spills in languorous fragrance from lilies of the South :  
It is the odorous night-flower wherewith your locks are bound,—  
Or the moon-pale soul of roses caught in a mesh of sound.

Arjava.





## CONTEMPORARY FRENCH POETRY

Dr. A. Aronson, B. A. ( Cantab. )

SEVERAL attempts have recently been made to deduce from the apparent disorder and incoherence of contemporary poetry some kind of classification, to abstract from its emotional and "metaphysical" complexity some unique order of experience. Although these attempts may be very useful for a general discussion on the literary value of modern poetry, they usually fail to provide the intelligent reader with a sound basis; they lay particular stress on the form or the general frame-work of contemporary poetry, without, however, indicating the peculiar kind of experience these poets had to go through, and the degree of awareness they were capable of in life. By choosing "awareness" and "experience" as the key-words for this essay, many misconceptions and misunderstandings will be avoided. Our discussion must, therefore, bear upon the following points: what kind of awareness is most frequently to be found represented in contemporary poetry; how far does the comprehension of modern environment affect the poet's sensibility; how can the artistic experience, which derives from awareness and comprehension, be evaluated? All these questions will be dealt with in connection with a comparatively new and essentially ambitious Anthology of contemporary French poetry.\* Although some particular problem might look quite different in England or in Germany, we may, however, assume that the fundamental experiences of an artist in our civilization is about the same everywhere. And it is only the *fundamental* experience that interests us here.

There are no literary standards available by which to judge, to justify, or to condemn "modern civilization"; the highly suspicious ease, with which we handle terms such as "classic", "romantic", "symbolist", "expressionist", fails us here. Literary critics of to-day are bound to be vague and non-committal, whenever they mention their own civilization. Apart from some politically or "aesthetically" pre-established conceptions, there is complete darkness around the *meaning* of our civilization, and the fundamental work is done not by literary critics or philosophers, but by scientists, psychologists, and sociologists. One is appalled, reading carefully any book on literary criticism (with a few exceptions, however,) by the utter ignorance as far as contemporary civilization is concerned combined with an astonishing degree of self-consciousness and self-impor-

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\* *Anthologie des Poètes de la n. r. f.*, Gallimard, 1936,

tance. One aspect of this civilization, namely the growing influence of contemporary society upon the poet's sensibility and work, is dealt with *en passant* in one of Mr. T. S. Eliot's essays ; his remark refers to all poets of our time, therefore we can apply it to our own particular discussion :

"It appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be difficult. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate, if necessary, language into his meaning." ( *Homage to John Dryden*, 1927. )

When Mr. T. S. Eliot wrote this, he undoubtedly had in mind poets such as Jules Laforgue and Tristan Corbière and not Rimbaud or Verlaine. And I believe there is more to be found in modern poetry than Laforgue's allusiveness, indirectness, and cultivated dissolution. And the Anthology of the N. R. F. is the best instance I know of, where a deeper comprehension and awareness of contemporary life becomes evident and where the poet's particular experience is no longer based upon an artificial and unconvincing madness ( as it is frequently the case with Laforgue and his school ), but upon the irrepressible problems of his own existence.

One of the first problems to be met with in a careful survey of this Anthology is that of the "group": the poet's group and those multiple other groups of his environment. This problem is by no means new, and can, in fact, be found at any period of poetic creation. The actuality of this problem to-day consists in a new kind of awareness, namely the awareness of the existence of a "minority-group" composed of all those who do not believe in the sincerity and constructiveness of modern civilization ; and of all those who feel themselves free from all ties of conventional social relationship, and free from all kinds of prejudices as well. In one of the first poems in this Anthology the following striking statement is to be found :

"We are but two or three men  
Free of all bonds  
Let us shake hands . . . "\*  
( G. Appolinaire : *Liens*. )

Behind this statement and the following question lies the same sort of awareness, namely that of the incompleteness, disbelief, and monotony, of modern civilization, as it exists at present :

"Man, wandering astray in the centuries,  
Wilt thou never find a contemporary ?..."  
( Jules Supervielle : *La Solitude*. )

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\* The translation in English of this and the following verses is by the writer of the article—Ed.

This awareness which is deeply anchored in many of the writers in the Anthology, frequently becomes unmistakable hatred or, at least, disgust : this transformation takes place in all those poems, in which life is no longer considered from a philosophical or "metaphysical" point of view, but in terms of the real, "actual" environment itself. Here we find side by side exclamations belonging to the old school of Laforgue :

"O dullness of umbrellas  
Lukewarm and constipated bourgeois..."

and other deeply moving, though allusive, lines, such as these :

"Here are at our sides our disjoined fists  
Our lassitude and our full strength...  
You see us marching along that straight road,  
Covered with dust and dirt, rain between our teeth.  
On this wide fan open to all winds  
The road of the nation is our strait gate..."

( Charles Peguy: *Présentation de la Beauce à Notre Dame de Chartres.* )

The most significant fact about this "disgust" is, that it is to be found most sincerely expressed in poets with a strongly developed "religious" feeling. Charles Peguy is one of them. Another is Paul Claudel :

"See me, ridiculous and wounded, suffocated in the midst of these unbreathable men, O blessed one, say then a divine word." ( *La Muse qui est la grace*, III. )

This disgust may, however, appear somewhat awkward, if it becomes frankly and unmistakably "denial", that is, if mere negation takes the place of a constructive awareness :

"And wherever I go, throughout the whole universe,  
I always come across  
Outside me as well as inside me  
The unfillable Void,  
The unconquerable Nothing..."

( Valéry Larbaud : *Le don de soi-meme.* )

All these quotations show a surprisingly strong reaction against the poet's environment. Whether he feels his creation as belonging to a "group", to a minority culture, or as belonging simply to his own individual existence and sensibility, he is, at any rate, aware of a process of dissolution and dissociation in contemporary life, a process which in the poet's work is expressed by a kind of restlessness representative of our time. At bottom, many of these French poets feel the same : they belong to a "caste" of untouchables, the world outside them they cannot touch without losing their sensibility, and hardly anybody ever cares for them : or, in poetic, language : "And now for ever I remain a single and uneven man, full of restlessness and toils. ( Paul Claudel : *La muse qui est la grace.* )



As the result of that restlessness, we find everywhere in the Anthology obvious signs of repression and inhibition, the desire to escape from the real and actual universe in order to penetrate into the semi-darkness of a Freudian day-dream : "Let me leave my visible body" ( L. P. Fargue ), says the one ; "at least, to go out naked into the night . . . And never to return to one's home. Neither in name nor in heart . . . To become one with stones and rivers . . . " says another ( Pierre Morhange ) ; and "In the darkness we shall see clear, my brothers, In the labyrinth we shall find the straight way" ( Henry Michaud ). The poet's sensibility obviously deteriorates here ; it is no longer the experience that matters, but only a peculiar kind of deformation of his nervous system. The careless reader may be moved by it, but his emotion will never be deeper than that of a person listening to day-dream-jazz-music. It is not the day-dream in itself that does harm to anybody, but its irresponsible cultivation. "Escapism" of this kind has never yet produced a work of art. There is, however, another form of restlessness to be found in the Anthology, a kind of anguish and torment which the French call "*l'angoisse métaphysique*", and which, I believe, is deeply anchored in the very character of the French people ; this "anguish" has, in fact, nothing whatever to do with escapism ; it is the emotional image of the awareness of disintegration, which is to be found in all great French poetry in the last 50 years : M. Paul Valéry's great poem "*Le cimetière marin*" is the best instance I know of. Here is an example from the Anthology, which, despite its mediocrity obviously belongs to that kind of restlessness.

"Then I become fierce and with downcast eyes,  
With hope benumbed and with mystery oppressed,  
I feel my heart pierced by a long shaft  
Of anguish and light."

( Robert Honnert. )

Very frequently the "untouchability" of the poet expresses itself through this "*angoisse métaphysique*"; it is not solitude the poet is afraid of, but the utter impossibility to lay hold on and to grasp things ; not only society, even nature is far removed from him ; he can only stretch out his hands and wait ; but in the meanwhile there is hidden torment and hope and expectation in his words :

"To seize, to seize the evening, the apple, and the statue,  
To seize the shadow and the wall and the end of the street,  
To seize the foot, the neck of the sleeping woman,  
And then to open one's hands. How many birds released,  
Ho many lost birds that become the street,  
The shadow, the wall, the evening, the apple and the statue."

( Jules Supervielle : *Saisir*. )

In its last consequence this metaphysical torment becomes negation of everything that is commonly called real ; as society and nature were but the mirrors of disintegration, so even the poet's own personality and the personality of all men is subjected to doubts ; only those poets again who are inspired by some kind of vague religious feeling attempt to put things together, to create out of the dissociation and chaos a new synthesis. Some of the best verses in this Anthology are of that kind :

"When we have acted our last parts,  
When we have laid down the cape and the cloak,  
When we have thrown away the mask and the knife,  
I beg you remember our long pilgrimages."

( Charles Peguy, cit. )

If there is no "angoisse métaphysique", that is, if the poet's sensibility is yet undeveloped and concerned with his own personality rather than with an evaluation of the metaphysical universe, then his frustrated desire for an adequate group is expressed in typically nostalgic writing. As good nostalgic writing is something very rare at present ( most of the "nostalgic" poets in the Anthology lose themselves in hopeless sentimentality ), it is extremely difficult to find one who does not turn loose his emotions. The best example, however, is to be found in that curious French poet who came over from Guadeloupe and who in his own peculiar melodious idiom expresses nostalgia of a deeper and maturer kind, S.-J. Perse :

"Then you were bathed in the green-leaf-water ; and the water also was of green sunshine ; and your mother's maids, tall shining girls, moved their warm feet near you who were trembling... And peace to those, when they are about to die, who have not seen this day. But news have come from my brother, the poet. He wrote something very sweet. And some heard of it..."

( *Pour fêter une enfance.* )

There is a striking similarity between the metaphysical poets of the 17th century and those contemporary writers. To-day also "the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked together" and "their attempts are always analytic" ( Dr. Johnson ) ; in that respect there is hardly any difference to be found here ; they both had to become, in the words of Mr. T. S. Eliot, more comprehensive and allusive, "in order to dislocate, if necessary, language" into their meaning. The means of doing so are, of course, not the same in the 17th and in the 20th century ; the question only remains, whether to-day poets are as capable of putting the dissociated material together into a new unity, as the metaphysical poets did. Surrealism, if this word may be used here, does not care much for a new unity ; association, resembling states of feeling, not trains of ideas, are all that matters ; the poet's sensibility is only aware of disintegration ; and

where should he look for a "new unity", when everything he experiences points towards chaos and decay? And as there is doubt wherever he goes, doubts as to the "reality" of nature, as to the sincerity of life in contemporary society, and to his own personality, whence is this synthesis to come? In the dislocation and deformation of language and in the extraordinary ability of mixing metaphors lies the answer: poets to-day have taken over allusiveness and indirectness in language without attempting to re-unite those dissociated intellectual elements. There is something very impressive in a sentence such as "a mailboat of silence glides over my heart" ( Jacques Baron : *Courage* ), but it stands alone in a poem full of mediocre atrocities. Language loses its genuine freshness, when the poet begins to torture it by new and vain inventions; of course, there is no plain meaning left, but, which is worse, allusiveness becomes lunacy, and the bewildered reader is standing before a crossword puzzle :

"He I knew corridors of flesh. As for the walls they I liquified themselves, and the last clap of thunder banished from the earth all the tombs." ( Robert Desnos : *A présent.* )

Sometimes the mixture of emotion and image seems to be appropriate, although it is not always genuine; here is a good example: "O what doubt, in what a trembling corridor"... (P. J. Jouve : *O Grandeur.* ) The keyword "trembling" obviously saves the situation; but in this kind of image it is difficult to say, whether it is realized or not. Here is another instance, where it certainly was not realized, and was brought about by some kind of Laforgue-reminiscence; this sort of poetical hysteria is, to say the least, most unconvincing :

"It was I remember a Monday  
A day when the soap makes the astronomers cry  
I saw her again on Tuesday  
Like an unfolded paper  
Floating on the winds of Olympus . . ."

( Benjamin Peret : *La semaine pale.* )

And sometimes an emotion takes the shape of a horrid "surrealist" day-dream; then everything is hidden in utter darkness; and it is doubtful indeed, whether this darkness, in which hardly perceptible shadows move hither and thither, might become "a new unity":

"Clever flesh life's and love's Exile  
Two great skeletons invited themselves  
And ground each other mouth to mouth  
In the steam of the café and the night  
But the eagle of the tattooed skin

Of the contagious old man wrinkled since the summer  
Rose up from the adored meat  
As the rainbow from the earth which trembles..."  
( Roger Vitrac : *La barrière en feu.* )

An evaluation of this Anthology seems to be particularly difficult ; I have chosen my quotations only in view of the subject I was most interested in, namely the discrepancy between the writer's aspirations and his actual environment ; many of the poets I have not mentioned at all, and I did not think it necessary to quote such well known poets as Mallarmé and Valéry again. Yet, if we attempt an evaluation from the merely critical and historical point of view ( keeping in mind the elements of tradition in French poetry ) we shall always reach the same result : by all its infinite variety and richness in form and content this Anthology represents a good deal of what is known as the "esprit du siècle", or the sensibility of our age. I do not know of an better instance amongst Anthologies of modern poetry, where the attempt has been made to collect poems of various contemporary writers belonging to very different spheres of life and yet great many of them being, consciously or unconsciously, united by the awareness of the failure of modern civilization. Some of the best poets feel the strong desire to do something about it ; yet, indeed, no one even attempts "to put things together". Nothing illustrates this state of mind better than a short poem by Jules Supervielle telling us about a "soirée musicale", "the ladies in black took their violins in order to play, their backs to the mirror", when suddenly in the midst of a quiet and familiar atmosphere, that of dream and restful darkness, somebody whispers to him : "You alone could do it, come at once."

The reader is left in doubt as to what this "it" refers. He must be contented with the colourful variety and strong emotional appeal expressed in many of the poems. He must also be contented with the statement that "the poet in our civilization as it exists at present, must be difficult". Whether this "difficulty" will create new impulses in poetry and a new kind of awareness, is hardly possible to tell.

## SUSPECTED FORGERY OF TWO OLD PERSIAN INSCRIPTIONS

Prof. V. Lesny

IN the "Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran" vol. II. (1930) p. 113 ff. E. Herzfeld has published an inscription which was engraved on a gold tablet which had been divided into several pieces. Herzfeld succeeded in piecing together the Old Persian inscription of 10 lines. The inscription, however, remained incomplete and the length of the missing portion could not be ascertained. Neither can we say if the inscription was also in Elamite and Babylonian. Herzfeld, however, is of opinion it was in both, but cannot give definite reasons for this. The inscription runs as follows :

*ariyāramna xšāyaθiya vazraka xšāyaθ-  
iya xšāyaθiyānām xšāyaθiya pārsā  
cahišpāiš xšāyaθiyahyā pusa haxāmanīšah-  
yā napā θātīy ariyāramna xšāyaθiya  
iyam dahyāuš pārsā tyam dārayāmīy  
hya /h/uvaspā /h/umartīyā manā baga  
vazraka a/h/uramazdā frāb/ara/ vašnā a/h/u-  
ramazdāha adam xšāyaθiya iyam da-  
hyāuš a/h/mīy θātīy ariyāramna  
/x/šāyaθiya a/h/uramazdā manā upastā-*

"Ariyāramna, the great king, the king of kings, the king in Pārsa, the son of king Cahišpāiš, the grandson of Haxāmanīš. Says the king Ariyāramna : "This country here, the Pārsa, which I hold, which possesses good horses and good men, has been entrusted to me by the great god Ahuramazdā. Through the grace of Ahuramazdā I am the king of this country here." Says the king Ariyāramna : "The aid of Ahuramazdā to me . . ."

One may feel reconciled to the historical surprise, that already Ariyāramna ( circa 610—580 B.C. ) is described as, "the great king, the king of kings, the king in Persia", but the inscription has evidently some grammatical inaccuracies : Instr. sing. *pārsā* in line 2 instead of Loc. sing. *pārsaiy* as it is the use in Dareios' inscriptions ; *tya* Acc. sing. neuter instead of Acc. fem. *tyām* in line 5 ; *hya* Nom. sing. masc. for *hyā* Nom. sing. fem. in line 6 and particularly *iyam dahyāuš* in the sense of a Genitive sing. in the sentence the sense of which is clear : *adam xšāyaθiya iyam dahyāuš ahmīy* "I am the king of this ( *iyam*, not declined ) country." Therefore the inscription has been declared by W. Caland, Jaarbook der. kon. Akad. van

Wettenschappen 1930 p. 206 ff., and decidedly by Hans Heinrich Schæder, Sitzungsberichte der Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 1931 p. 635 ff. and 1935 p. 489 ff., as a forgery of the 4th century B. C., as the language of the inscription shows similar indications of a state of decay as do other inscriptions of this period.

Linguistic objections are, no doubt, important, but I fail to see any reason why the inscription should have at all been forged.

Let us try to elucidate the mistakes in grammar. Of all the defects in language, brought forward by Schæder and measured by him and others of the same opinion according to the linguistic usage evinced in Persian inscriptions of the kings Dareios and Xerxes, only one is really inexplicable, viz., *iyam dahyāuš* in the sentence *adam xšāyaθiya iyam dahyāuš a(h)mīy*. It may be assumed that the copyist of the inscription did not know the Persian language. The engravers employed by Achaemenian kings were not Persians. In the 6th century B. C., in Persia there were no persons able to engrave cuneiform signs (cf. Meillet—Benveniste "Grammaire du vieux-perse", Paris 1931 p. 36). The copyist, being an Aramean, certainly was in the habit of reading words backwards and it may be assumed with a certain amount of probability that he started in this way also in the case of the Genitive *dahyāuš* and, having in his original copy 3 lines above the Nominative *iyam dahyāuš*, engraved the same in this place where this grammatical combination is unjustifiable and to which he would not have committed himself if he really understood the language. Contrary to Prof. Schæder I am of opinion that this grammatical error particularly supports the authenticity of the inscription.

Some two years ago E. Herzfeld published in his *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, vol. VII. (1935) p. 1 ff. ("Eine Silberschüssel Artaxerxes' I") a short Persian inscription of Artaxerxes I., newly discovered and occurring on the margin of a silver vessel. The inscription has been similarly proclaimed by the same learned author (cf. H. H. Schaller in *Sitzungsberichte der Preuss. Akad. der Wissenschaften, phil.—hist. Klasse* 1935, p. 489 ff.) as a modern forgery for linguistic reasons. This short inscription runs as follow :

*Artaxšassā xšāyaθiya vazraka xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām xšāyaθiya dahyūnām xšayāršahyā xšāyaθiyahyā pussa xšāyaršahyā dārayava/h/ušahyā xšāyaθiyahyā pussa Hazāmanišiyahyā imam bātugara šaiyamam viθijā kṛta.*

Both the sense and the grammar are, undoubtedly, not given correctly. The meaning (not the translation) of the inscription may be rendered thus :

"Artaxerxes, the great king, the king of kings, the king of countries, the son of king Xerxes, the grandson of king Dareios, Achaemenian, ordered this silver vessel to be made for use in his palace."

There is something missing in the inscription. After the words *xšāyāršahyā xšāyadīyahyā pussa* "the son of the king Xerxes," there may have occurred in the original copy from which the inscription was being worked some words as "*dārayava/h/ušahyā xšāyadīyahyā napā*" which would give the proper sense. The word *xšāyāršahyā* before *dārayava/h/ušahyā* may have been engraved by a mere mistake and lack of proper attention of the copyist. It is, however, greatly due to the last sentence that the inscription has been declared by Prof. Schaefer as a modern forgery.

Even the errors of this inscription, I must say, may be accounted for, at least partially, if the inscription is not regarded from the very beginning as a forgery. The grammar of the last sentence as it runs is barbarous. It has been translated by Schaefer into Latin thus : "Qui hunc patera argentum domi factus." The grammar, however, may be restored if we assume that the form *krta* stands for the Old Iranian 3 sing. pret. med. *\*akrta*, sans. *akṛta*. It must not be forgotten that such forms without augment actually occur, cf. B. V. 11 : *utā daiy mṛda* "and he annihilated them." The form *akṛta*, it is true, does not as yet appear in our inscriptions, but the actually occurring form *akutā* must have originated from āryan *akṛta* ; which form is found in the Vedas. That such forms with *y* must have been in use in the oldest period of the Old Persian can be inferred from the form *akariya-yantā* B. III. 92 "they were made", the accuracy of which has not been doubted by scholars so far and which is found side by side with *akuna-vayantā*, and from the form *akariy* ( Dar. Susa XII ).

That old forms appear side by side with the new ones, may be inferred from the unique form *a/h/urahya mazdāha* in Xerx. Pers. c. beside the regular form *ahuramazdāhā*.

By such an emendation the main inaccuracy in grammar is removed and the sense may be restored : *hya . . . (a)krta* "who has made for himself", ie. "who has ordered to make for himself" instead of the incomprehensible "who has been made." The object which the king has ordered to be made for himself is expressed by the words "*bātugāra saiyamam*", which may be a compound. The members of a compound are, if only occasionally, separated by a word-divider. Both words were unknown up to now. The meaning of *bātugāra* may be conjectured from Athenaios 11. 27 (cf. Schaefer 1. c. p. 491) *persika de phiade batiake* ; it may, therefore, have the meaning "a vessel." The word *saiyamam* may be an old adaptation of the Greek word *asemos*, but may—as is urged by Herzfeld against Schaefer, in my judgment successfully—have been borrowed already in the 4th century B.C. (cf. Herzfeld "Die Silberschüsseln Artaxerxes' des I und die 'goldene fundamenturkunde des Ariaramnes" in *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, vol VIII ( 1936 ), p. 5-51 ). The compound may have the meaning "a silver vessel." And the document is in my opinion authentic.

## SARAT CHANDRA CHATTERJEE\*

### *The Man and the Author*

Nandagopal Sengupta

DURING my brief stay in Calcutta, last Christmas, I could not miss the opportunity of calling at the Park Nursing Home where Sarat Chandra was laid up with serious illness. This was the last time that I saw him on this earth and this is by far the most significant meeting in all my life.

I found him considerably pulled down, his eyes sunk in their sockets and lips betraying more scepticism than hope of recovery. This seemed to me something foreign in his element. I enquired after his health, to which he made a characteristic reply, "Who the devil cares to linger on!" At the end of the interview he said, "This life, nevertheless, has not been altogether fruitless for me. I began as a street-boy and I end—as you all know me."

There lies the essence of his whole life. Sarat Chandra was tutored in the school of life. He saw life not through books, nor from the arm-chair of sympathetic approbation. His lot was cast in the midst of the common people and personally he never rose above the average level of experience. He was born in a family by no means remarkable and his education had been but scanty. He had to suffer the yoke of clerical drudgery to earn his living and the society he was placed in contributed nothing to his intellectual upliftment. But he saw life as it exists, with all its sorrows and miseries. He required no hired spectacles to observe it and no false phraseology to depict it. The life we come across in our everyday living is of a composite character, wherein vice is as much a truth as goodness, tyranny as much a fact as sacrifice. One who is fully aware of life cannot lose sight of any of its aspects and Sarat Chandra most surely did not. For he wholeheartedly belonged to it; he fought it out, measured his triumph or failure with relation to its struggle, and this served as the most efficient background to his literary activity.

His literary life, so far as it is known to us, began very early; he was still a boy, reckless and dissipated, struggling through various pursuits at Bhagalpore, when he first tried his hand at letters. *'The Crow's Nest'*, *'Subha da'*, *'Love of Anupama'*, *'Kasinath'*—just a handful of stories constitute his juvenile production. Of these only the last has been preserved; the earlier ones have been hopelessly lost. His first printed story, *'The*

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\*See Vol. II, Part 8 of this Journal for another learned article on the same novelist.—Ed.



*Temple'*—a prize-story, was published under the borrowed name of one of his cousins. This and a manuscript containing his remarkable story, '*The Eldest Sister*' (*Bara Didi*), he bequeathed to his friends and left the country for Burma in quest of fortune. His career as a clerk proved to be a veritable wild-goose chase, which he was forced to abandon after several experiments and at last settled down at Calcutta and took to letters as the main prop of his life. But even while in Burma, the ledgers of clerical drudgery could not swallow up his literary fire; he wrote and wrote most vehemently. His '*Bara Didi*', already referred to, was being serially published in the *Bharati*, and side by side with it '*Charitra Hin*' (*The Characterless*) was appearing in the *Jamuna* and a series of short novels or long stories—'*Devadas*', '*Chandranath*', '*Bindu's Son*', '*The Transition of Ram*' and, perhaps, '*Niskriti*' (*The Release*) also made their appearance in the pages of *Jamuna*. None of his youthful compositions, however, except '*Bara Didi*', found a place in any of the important periodicals of that time. Mr. D. L. Roy is said to have rejected '*Charitra Hin*' on ground of indecency, when the manuscript was submitted for *Bharatbarsa*. While yet in Burma, he began writing the first part of '*Srikanta*', the famous epic-novel in four parts.

I have already told that Sarat Chandra acquired his knowledge of the world and man from a direct acquaintance with life at large. Driven out of parental house at Devanandapore, Hughli, early in life, and mainly brought up in his maternal uncle's place, he mixed with all grades of society with radical indiscrimination and imbibed many of its vices, intoxication being the most prominent of them, though he also developed a catholicity of taste and a genuine sympathy for mankind in general.

His literary productions bear the sure stamp of intimate and personal touch with life and his liberal and large-hearted attitude towards human frailties is the genuine outcome of an unsophisticated sympathy. He had studied very little of books, but his study of life more than made up for the lack of a stereotyped process of knowledge, and the types, incidents, and occasions that presented themselves at random on his way, served as inspiration to his creative imagination.

We are told that a great deal of his work is based on characters that really existed. His '*Srikanta*', (though the belief is often obstinately carried to excess) is autobiographical, and in '*Bara Didi*', '*Swami*' (*The Husband*) and '*Pandit Mahasay*' he has made real personalities relive in fictional setting. Indeed, most of his innumerable characters owe their creation to no midsummer night's dream; they are real figures—magnified indeed and often overcoloured—but thereby neither impaired nor rendered impersonal. There have been, as there would be, great names in fiction,

who have drawn inspiration as well as material entirely from imagination, but Sarat Chandra, as far as we knew him, would not, or could not, proceed a single step without positive data from actual life.

The real importance of an artist consists not so much on what or how he acquires, as on how he represents and what he represents. It is in the keenness of observation and the transfiguration of that observation into something so real that it need not be actual, that marks a good novelist. This ready receptiveness in Sarat Chandra had not been impaired by the so-called higher education, nor was he subject to any sort of affectation. He has been by far the most successful novelist, because he was most sincere, both in his thought and in his execution. That is why he has no demons nor deities in his world ; he has got only human beings, who are normal ; he picked them up normally too.

Sarat Chandra has often been wrongly upheld as the champion of revolt or the innovator of realism in Bengali fiction. It is needless to say that he belonged neither to the tradition of modernism, nor was he as much of a conscious artist as we moderns believe him to be.

He was a true middle-class Bengalee, taught in the school of stern reality, who saw life as it exists, in its darkest as well as brightest aspects. He differs from his predecessors, Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath, in this that he did not look up to men as so many ideas embodied to represent a particular institution, nor did he consider man as the representative of the universal man, who is more concerned with rationalisation and intellectual synthesis in a dispassionate, impersonal way, than with his full-blooded struggle with life as a simple human being. Necessarily he depicts man's frailties, though neither to rouse a clamour for reform, nor to provoke an intellectual quest about the legitimacy of the phenomenon. He paints man, as one is accustomed to see him, and there ends his business. Spiritually he did not belong to the upper ladder of society ; his world ( rightly the greater part of the world ) consisted of the multitude, who eat and love and fight for most part of their lives ; and if ever he strayed into the mysteries of higher pursuits, it is with the selfsame easy disposition with which he pictured them. No bias or fetish could detract him from life as he saw it, no preoccupation could hinder the congenial tenor of his mind. His best sympathies were with the lowly and the fallen, the poor and the oppressed, for he himself happened to be one of them ; but he never allowed himself to be worked up to hatred of those who have escaped misfortunes, and always retained that amount of flexibility of mind and width of vision to rise above his personal embitterments. So the journalistic hyperbole about his revolt or realism is not half so true as his excellence as an artist of the highest order.

Let us review some of the principal female characters in his books,—Abhaya, Ananda Didi, Chandramukhi, Sabitri, Rajlakshmi, Bindu, Narayani. None of them, we may be sure, is to be found anywhere inside our domestic threshold : they think, feel and act in the opposite way to what we are accustomed to expect from them. We appreciate maternity in a mother and expect wifely caresses from a wife, but if we find these in persons who are neither mothers nor wives, rather persons belonging to different social categories, we simply nod our wise heads and frown on their conduct. Judged from this point of view, Sarat Chandra is not a realist, not even a true portrayer of human life. But if we can shed our worn-out convictions and look a little deeper, we may discover that while one aspect of an individual may be black with vice, another aspect—a deeper one—may be quite free from any taint whatsoever, and both may be equally true. Even in a whore the mother may urge for expression as passionately as her promiscuity ; and this promiscuity, too, if judged with sympathy, may be found to be no more than a mere weakness, a weakness which society might have the goodness to forgive. The converse may equally hold good.

To look at life from this standpoint, where chastity and debauchery, wealth and poverty, honesty and villainy—one apparent, the other suppressed—are blended together, is to see life in its entirety. If we call this realism, we may ; for, like social realities, psychic realities are no less obvious. True realism, however, admits of no attachment ; it is almost a kind of asceticism ; while Sarat Chandra's outlook was more or less emotional. Thus, like all artists, he is not a rigid realist, nor does he *photograph* life.

As to his spirit of revolt, one word, we hope, would suffice. A literature that bears the clear stamp of propaganda on its forehead is much too journalistic and ephemeral ; it holds its day and then dies out unperceived. Revolt, when introduced deliberately, renders literature nothing better than newspaper squabbles. Had Sarat Chandra been subject to this obsession, he would have belittled chastity while condoning debauchery, would have decried gentry in championing the cause of the peasantry. That might have won him the laurel of modernism, but surely not without viciating his literary excellence. Happily, however, he was unobstructed by any 'ism' ; thus good and bad, high and low, found their respective acknowledgment and due recognition in his works. Thus Akbar Ali, the '*lathial*' ( a sort of Bengali highwayman ), has his due place by the side of Ramesh, the pious-minded zaminder. Sabitri the hotel-waitress or Rajlakshmi the dancing maid, keeps company with Bisweswari or Mrinal, prodigies of innocence and virtue. Where there was occasion to unmask the guilt of concealed barbarity, Sarat Chandra did that with ample justice, regardless of consequences ; without depriving, however, even the wrong doer of his sympathy. Where there

was occasion for revolt in his work, it sprung up as a matter of course, without any strain or forced motive. The real merit of a novelist consists in keeping all his 'isms' suppressed inside the structure of the story, so that while one feels them, one cannot draw them out as one cannot extract the human skeleton from out of a living organism.

Sarat Chandra showed this exceptional skill and artistic exactness in almost all his books, excepting the latest ones—'*The Last Question*', '*The Demands of the Way*' and '*Bipradas*', which are his decadent productions, sterile and insipid, viciated by a false conceit of intellectualism. Luckily they are only a few.

But the time for a thorough criticism of his works is perhaps not yet come. The memory of his magnanimous personality is yet sufficiently fresh to disarm a hostile critic. What we have attempted in the preceding pages is to hint at the keynote of his works and link it to his personal life. Many things remain unsaid. Time will bring them out one by one, till a true and comprehensive estimate of his life and works is arrived at.

Personally I had the privilege of a very intimate acquaintance with the great novelist, a relation which was never to be severed in his life-time, in spite of the very many reckless criticisms made by me on his recent books. He had ascended the highest pinnacle of fame and success, and though we lagged far behind, the way to spiritual communion between him and ourselves was never closed. He would take us into his utmost confidence, sometimes argue and even quarrel with us, but never in so long a period as eight years, we found him adverse or ill-disposed, simply on the ground that we were insignificant. His frank and amiable treatment of his friends and humorous disposition bore no trace of snobbery or intellectual prudery: he was just like his heroes, a typical Bengalee, with his best and worst propensities. Intellectual he was not. People urged him to be one and when he tried to, he met with indifferent success. This pained him, for he was not fully aware of the real merit of his works. His success gratified him, indeed, but certainly never did overwhelm him. Else he would not have been so much a carefree child of nature, when the whole country was crowding at his door.

Today he is gone and has taken away with him all his faults and failings, all the mystery that enveloped his youth, all the struggles and sufferings his life was crowded with and has become a disembodied literary spirit for ever to be remembered in history. The country will ever remember him in terms of his own creations: his boyhood they will discover in Ram or Indranath, early youth in Devdas and full manhood in Srikanta; the full galaxy of his men and women will flock around his formless personality and own him as their own.

## A LETTER

HERE I send you my poems  
densely packed in this writing book  
like a cage crowded with birds.  
The blue space, the infinity around constellations,  
through which flocked my verses,  
is left outside.  
Stars, torn from the heart of night,  
and tightly knit into a chain  
may fetch a high price  
from some jeweller in the suburb of paradise,  
but the gods would miss from it the ethereal value  
of the divinely undefined.  
Imagine a song suddenly flashing up like a flying fish,  
from the silent depth of time !  
Would you care to catch it in your net  
and exhibit it in your glass vessel  
among a swarm of captives ?

In the expansive epoch of lordly leisure,  
the poet read his poems day by day  
before his bounteous sovereign,  
when the spirit of the printing press was not there  
to smear with black dumbness  
the background of a resonant leisure,  
alive with the natural accompaniment of the irrelevant ;  
when the stanzas were not ranged into perfect packets of alphabets,  
to be silently swallowed.

Alas, the poems which were for the listening ears  
are tied today as chained lines of slaves  
before their masters of critical eyes,  
and banished into the greyness of tuneless papers,  
and those that are kissed by eternity  
have lost their way in the publishers' market.

For it is a desperate age of hurry and hustle  
and the lyric muse has to take her journey  
to her tryst of hearts  
on trams and buses.

I sigh and wish that I had lived  
in the golden age of Kalidasa,  
that you were,—but what is the use of wild and idle  
wishing ?

I am hopelessly born in the age of the busy printing press,  
a belated Kalidasa,  
and you, my love, are utterly modern.

Listlessly you turn the pages of my poems  
reclining in your easy chair,  
and you never have the chance to listen  
with half-shut eyes to the murmur of metre  
and at the end to crown your poet with a rose-wreath.

The only payment you make  
is the payment of a few silver coins  
to the keeper of the bookstall  
in the College Square.

*Rabindranath Tagore*

## **SOCIAL PLURALISM IN CHINA OF YESTERDAY \***

Prof. Dr. Witold Jablonsky †

CHINA, seen through ancient Chinese sources of information, appears like a strong and harmonious monolith. We admire in this monument the force of tradition, the solidarity of the family life, and the stability of the civilisation. Whatever discordant notes may be found in it, are due either to the foreign influences or the degeneration of the ruling dynasties. The very rare accounts by foreign visitors which, since the time of Marco Polo till the 18th century, have come down to us, represent the Celestial Empire as polished and educated. And, in fact, what the philosophers of the period of enlightened absolutism admired most was the good order in administration, the democratic spirit in the recruitment of officers and the supremacy of a paternal and strong government over the established religions.

After the long period of Napoleonic wars and the great industrial revolution, the West began to revive her contact with China, for the purpose of commercial expansion. It is only then that the old records of the missionaries are supplemented by the reports of the merchants who got acquainted, for the sake of their business, with China and her merchants and mandarins. The news supplied by them did not always reach the scholars, but infiltrated into the secretariat offices and the cabins of the admirals. These informations led to the opium war which resulted in the first contact of Europe with modern China which was both serious and tragic. This new method of investigation revealed to astonished Europe the military insufficiency of China, the weakness of her administrative machinery and the great autonomous character of the provinces in relation to the central power.

From then on, we get two sources of information on China, one from China herself, the sinology which is scholarly and based on texts, and the other based on the observation of contemporaneous life and consists of sociological studies.

The years went on and along with it the quantity of information increased and its quality improved more and more, but the two pictures of China gathered from these sources never resembled each other. The

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Sinologists analysed the classical texts with great success but they had a sort of repugnance to say anything on the real and living China. Since the beginning of the 20th century the actual difference became very marked and unforeseen. At last, in this country of traditions, the Revolution broke out and the heritage of the 24 dynasties fell into the hands of the Republic. The faith in the repetition of historical process, as suggested by the Chinese thought, is so great, that even now the actual condition of China is often explained as a normal intermediate period preceding a restoration.

Our task is not to predict the future but to do researches in the past of the factors which compose the contemporary life. In this effort perhaps we will not evince a greater timidity than the philologists, who draw upon the ancient texts to form their opinion about China. For this task we will compare the traditional opinions with the sociological data. Such observations made mostly by the Americans and English, differ from those of the continental Sinologists. The difference originates from the scholars. The English and the Americans are, on account of the simplicity of their language and their pragmatic attitude, well equipped for sociological observations.<sup>1</sup> As we can not and do not wish to meddle with the dangerous matters of political actualities, we will restrict our study to the analysis of the social structure of China of yesterday, which, except in the matters of politics, still exercises its influence.

To an uninitiated observer the history of China presents itself as a series of dogmatic set-backs to the traditional state of things.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to determine whether this is due to the fragile character of the attempts at realisation or to the persistence of the old ideal. It seems that, in this art of renewing, the Manchu dynasty excelled as it attempted with the zeal of neophytes to personify the old Chinese model of a strong and

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1. Let us refer only to : Doolittle—*Social life of the Chinese*, New York, 1865 ; A. H. Smith—*Village Life in China*, London, 1899 ; Gamble & Burgess, *Peking, A Social Survey*, 1921 ; J. Dickinson—*Observations on Social Life in a North China Village*, Peking, 1924 ; D. H. Kulp, *Country Life in South China*, New York, 1925 ; R. H. Tawney, *Land and Labour in China*, London 1931.

2. The dynasties are said to have followed a historical scheme like this : The origin of the ruling dynasty is military but as soon as its power is well established the bureaucrats and the courtiers take the reins of the government and soon make the people forget, by their oppression, the real merits of the dynasty in the re-establishment of order. Incapable of driving away the external enemy and of putting down internal revolts they at last yield their place to a new military class which becomes organised. And then this new power, after having driven out the external enemy and putting down the revolt of the people takes in its hands the supreme authority. If it fails, it carries with it the reigning dynasty in its fall and the place is yielded to a new dynasty which is founded by the conquerors or rebels.



paternal government. But this regime has now been demolished and we have to enquire only about the immutable character of the ideals and the impermanent character of the institutions which have upheld these ideals. Our attention, therefore, will be confined to the static and dynamic elements of the Chinese society.

If we want to apply the European notions to the Chinese conditions we would be led to an enquiry as to the strength of the state, the regularity of the laws and the principal basis of the stability of the regime in the prestige of the established religions. From the beginning we are confronted with serious difficulties, because whatever the "outsiders" (*wai kuo jen*) or the foreigners may think about China and may arrange for China in the international agreements, China would remain for the Chinese not a state, surrounded by other states, but a civilised world, encircled by barbarous countries. The historical experience of China, which is several thousands of years old and her contact with the people, which, though fruitful was less frequent, have contributed to this conception of the inferiority of the foreigners. On the confines of the civilised world may exist a more or less organised population, but to the Chinese it is the chaos of barbarity which surrounds the Chinese cosmos. This chaos is separated from the cosmos, not as a national organism of heterogenous and hostile origin but like the Mongolian steppes in relation to the barley fields or like the rocky solitudes of Tibet in relation to the rice fields, artificially irrigated. There, where Nature has forgotten the two worlds, it is man who has raised the Great Wall. The interpenetration of these two elements can not but give only one result, the Chinese would bring with them their "climate" wherever they would go, whereas the barbarians, penetrating into China, would only increase their own number.

The European notion of political frontier means the limit of the world of civilisation to the Chinese. But, if we look into the interior of the Great Wall, we would see that other frontiers have also been raised there: a great wall separates two provinces<sup>1</sup> and the strait that connects them is closed by a gate. The city<sup>2</sup> is defended by means of a wall of fields which surrounds it. Everywhere the inhabitants are benefited by the natural frontiers and if there is need for it they strengthen them artificially. The civilised world is composed of water-tight compartments amongst which the smallest is the Chinese family confined within its house which is well shut to the outsider.

The political frontier, which in Europe is only an external element and

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1. As for example Ho-pei is separated from Shan-Si.

2. In China a city is defined as a walled town.

consolidates the state, plays in China a quite different rôle. The most important of the frontiers are the four walls of the house. It is only in this limited atmosphere that the solidarity is complete. The force of resistance against the external enemy diminishes in the measure of the distance from the home of the family. It becomes extremely weak near the last frontier, where the Chinese world ends. At this immense external frontier, marked by the Great Wall, closed by gigantic mountain systems and washed by a deep ocean, the influx of the barbarians could have been easily stopped. But it was not stopped either by fortified frontiers of the province or by the city walls. It is the modest walls along the footpaths which alone offered an invincible resistance. They were defended by a compact and unified garrison, namely, the Chinese family.

The Chinese family of which the members are united by agnatic relation lives under the same roof, possesses an economic, juridical and religious autonomy. The principle of an undivided heritage, often observed, strengthens still more the cohesion of the family. The authority of the parents is redoubled; that of the father is exercised on the male members of the family and controls their professional occupations and that of the mother is exercised on the female members of the family and regulates the life of the inner apartments. Last of all the cult of ancestors and filial piety contribute to the unity of the group.

The Chinese nation, composed of such compact monads can easily lose its political institutions. But they can be automatically reconstituted if the ideal of family organisation, zealously guarded in the homes, is realised in the political sphere of life. This ideal projected on a larger plane, gives us a hierarchy of officials which is only another aspect of the autonomous mechanism of the private life. As the life of the inner apartments, in spite of its non-official bearing, remains the true bastion of resistance against foreign attacks,<sup>1</sup> so also in a higher and larger sphere the private life was the most victorious affirmation of the Chinese genius. Under these conditions, it is not possible to attribute a decisive rôle to the state in the preservation of the national integrity. The notion of the state oscillates between the microcosm of the family and the macrocosm of the world at large.

Just like the state, law has no greater influence in the domain of social relations. Its causes are numerous. First of all, there was never in China

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1. The government of the Manchu dynasty was sufficiently powerful to compel the Chinese to twist their hair but it was impossible to stop them from bandaging their feet. This practice was abandoned only when the Chinese themselves realised the superstitious nature of this custom.

a class of legislators, who were sufficiently powerful to try to integrate the entire Chinese life in juridical formulae. It is true that the tradition of codification is very old in China,<sup>1</sup> but the Chinese legislation, theoretically embracing all the spheres of life, had really a very restricted field of action. The legislators did not have the ambition of defining the rights and obligations of the individuals, but only of ensuring the prerogatives of the family and the monarchy. The Chinese law did not follow the example of the Roman law, because it did not like to meddle with the affairs of the individuals for fear of impairing the authority of the family.<sup>2</sup> In some paragraphs of the code there is mention of collective responsibility but there is a hesitation to give to the tribunals a jurisdiction over conflicts amongst the members of the family. The corporations also prefer an arbitration to the intervention of the family.

The ancient belief, that restricts the law to the common man, survives in the opinion, that all contact of the individual, whether as a party or as a witness, with the tribunal, pollutes him. Thus the law, which accentuates the penal aspect, is codified as a ready-reckoner of the punishments. The omissions of the juridical system were made good by the ceremonial, which contained precise instruction regarding the conduct. The customs were partly incorporated in the codes and partly in the precedents, controlling the corporative arbitration. Thus the law in China was far from enjoying the monopoly of the universal regulation of social relations.<sup>3</sup>

The Imperial Government which functioned during long centuries as an administrative system, equipped with a formidable bureaucratic machinery, was much less a juridical than a religious institution. The Imperial authority is not constituted by any constitutional declaration, but by the heavenly mandate. The Imperial authority, which operates, owes its stability to the exercise of functions which assure the regular play of the forces of nature. As universal order depends on the magico-religious activities of the sovereign, his royal rulings must have a bearing on their sacerdotal applications. The

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1. The code of the T'ang dynasty of the year 654 A.D., which is very big as well as detailed, is the model of the codes of later dynasties. The code of the Ts'ing dynasty, the *Ta ts'ing lin li*, of the year 1646 A.D., which on account of its precision was admired by the first European translators was in force with certain modifications up to 1912.

2. The *Ta Ts'ing lin li*, in the paragraphs devoted to the accused, prescribes, in exceptional cases, severe punishment for the children who accuse their parents, even though such accusations may prove to be well founded.

3. Similarly the domain of international relations was for the Chinese quite abnormal, as these relations were at first considered to be links of vassalage of the barbarians with the Empire and later they were simply a series of unbearable privileges extorted by the conquerors.

mandate which is accorded to the founder of a dynasty, in recompense of the accumulated merits of his ancestors, is of use to his successors till the moral capital is exhausted. Thus at the highest scale of the human hierarchy we find not an individual but a collective body, a complete race composed of the dead and the living.

The cults, which are officially practised by the Emperor in the interest of the entire society, neither establish a mutual relationship between the subjects nor bring them nearer to the throne. It is only when the Emperor is proved inefficient in his ritual activity by dislocating the universal order through his incapacity, that the latent constitution of the Chinese monarchy appears. The people has then the undisputed right to revolt against the Emperor who is unworthy of the mandate. Thus the Heavens are the final guarantee for the tacit contract between the sovereign and his people.

If we wish to search for European analogies, we would find in China the churches which represent the religious side of the Chinese civilisation. Unfortunately neither Confucianism, nor Taoism, nor even Buddhism can pretend to comprise all the domains claimed as undisputable property by the religions in the West. The confessional statistics existed in many of the European countries and religion had a very large administrative aspect. There are even states, where the citizens are administratively connected with a church and are obliged to have contact with it from their birth till death. The cause of this state of things is, that the Church inherited to some extent the administrative institutions of the Roman church. In China, on the contrary, the Empire which was theoretically immutable, always preserved its administrative monopoly intact and, on account of its earthly mission, reserved to itself the supremacy over all sorts of religious organisations.

The religious life has a different rôle in China from that it has in Europe. In this regard, no statistics will be of use for the simple reason, that no religion in China binds its adherent to an exclusive body and that, on account of it, the clergymen of different sects do not form well-organised hierarchies. The devout followers, the adherents as well as those who are only curious about it or even those who are indifferent, all have the opportunity of following the religious services of the priests. An objective value is attached to the sacerdotal functions, independently of personal convictions. Sometimes the precepts of various religions are applied at one and the same time. It thus happens, that the same man in his public and private life observes the Confucian moral, believes in the doctrine of re-incarnation with the Buddhists and still does not cease to prolong his life according to the magico-hygienic prescriptions of Taoism. These eclectics

wisely choose the essential elements of each religion in order to build a composite system. In fact, the Confucianism which is interested in man either as a member of the family or as a citizen is primarily a moral law ; the Buddhism, on account of its mission to save man from the misery of the world, is a kind of soteriology, while the Taoism, on account of its ambition to preserve life indefinitely, is a kind of sublime hygiene. These systems, thus modified, lose their conflicting characters and constitute harmonious complements.

We have, therefore, so far as Buddhism and Taoism are concerned, a regular clergy and a large mass which does not constitute a church but a floating body of clientage. The fact, that neither Buddhism nor Taoism, although they received alms, often liberal but always free, did become great economic forces, reduced these two religions to monastic communities practically independent and isolated. The Confucianism, which never had a clergy properly so called, owes its immutability to its identification with a well-defined social class, viz. "the enlightened".

In our short review we can see, that besides the monarchy, which was in ancient times the symbol of national unity, the division of the territory in parts, the autonomy of the family, the insufficient character of the law and the scattered religious organisations, all, led to a pluralism in the social organisation of China. But it would be premature to deduce too hasty conclusions from it, because we have begun to discuss the question from the point of view of the European notions of state, law and religion, without trying to know their value in their Chinese environment. It is therefore high time to reconsider the whole question in its objective aspect.

The Chinese territory is an agglomeration of very compact cells on account of the regional egoism of the inhabitants which is a danger to national unity. The West tried to fight against these internal barriers, namely octroi, toll, local differences in the standard of money, weight and measure, through its technical perfection and economic interests. But this spirit of particularism, both local and political, if it was not favourable to Western onrush, had its deep root in the Chinese thought, which never feels idle to underline the relation of man to the land which he cultivates, The difference between the city and the village is not so essential as that between the bourgeois and the villager in relation to their share of the land and the burial ground. This patrimony is his true native land, to which he comes back always whether dead or alive.

The disappearance of an organised religious life and the little importance attached to law are due to the fact, that the most important part of the Chinese life is passed in the house of an exclusive and strongly hierarchical family. This family is composed of parents, their male descen-

dants with their respective small families, the unmarried girls, and the temporary guests who would go to live also in other houses. In the family reigns the economic solidarity, which weakens with the dispersion of its members from the paternal house. The internal conflicts are regulated by the authority of the chief of the family guided by the interests of the domestic hierarchy. The religious connections, which contribute to this unity, are the cult of common ancestors, who are appointed to protect their descendants. The family, the house and the fields, these constitute the Chinese microcosm; the house is its fortified capital and the fields represent the conquered territory which supply food for the living and graveyard for the dead.

The Chinese families live side by side and thus fill the towns and villages. The difference between these two kinds of habitations is of capital interest; the town and the village are differently organised, although they are composed of identical units, viz. the family.

The village is inhabited by families, either of different names and origin, or of the same lineage but quite numerous. In the latter case the feeling of cohesion is still more strengthened. The commune forms the first group above the family. It does not depend on the higher administration except for the fiscal and criminal affairs. The authority rests in the hands of the mayor. He shares it with the dignitaries, nominated by the public by virtue of their wealth and education.

The village possesses numerous associations, either utilitarian or recreative. Hence we would find there associations for protecting the fields, for financing the industrial and agricultural enterprises and for loans on co-operative basis. Besides these there are musical societies, the fencing societies, and the nurseries, which in earlier times supplied the local militia. The commune finances along with neighbouring villages, supplies teachers to the schools, takes charge of the public streets and high-ways, undertakes public works, builds temples and founds rural theatres.

Thus in the family reigns the hierarchy, and in the commune, the mutual relations of the heads of families are based on the comradeship of equality which is mitigated only either by wealth or by education. A certain amount of reciprocal emulation, however, exists and it is best translated in the famous question of "face" which involves a point of honour. This appears specially in the matter of relation with the neighbours of a frontier village which is further complicated by territorial rivalry and matrimonial alliances. For the prevalence of the system of exogamy it is easier to find a daughter-in-law in the neighbouring village. The two ceremonies of marriage and burial, on the occasion of which the entire family comes out in public, are very expensive. On these occasions, mutual help, which is however duly registered, is most necessary.

The prestige of a commune is augmented when it succeeds in bringing up an educated man. For this even a subscription is worth raising, because an enlightened man in fulfilling high offices in a distant country honours his own village. He is still more useful to the commune after retirement, when he returns to his village and helps everybody with his practical knowledge and social relations.

The villager also comes out from his village, either for a pilgrimage or for selling his goods at the fair. He can also have relation with the external world even without coming out of his village, either with the shopkeeper settled by his side or with the itinerant merchants, the begging monks, the fortune-tellers, the public reciters or actors. All these people are foreigners, vagabonds, intruders and arouse insatiable curiosity in the members of the inner apartments of the house and against which your house can never be sufficiently protected. All this traffic of foreign elements does not, however, shake the equilibrium of the community, which possesses within itself more dangerous enemies. They are those amongst the co-villagers who, possessed of an energy and spirit of adventure, fight against the prestige of wealth and education established through ages. Being celibate and without any fortune, they have no vulnerable points. They are met with in the old romances, either as the righters of wrong or as inexorable bandits. Any education, which they may possess, comes also from teachers of uncontested reputation of the villages.

The city differs from the country not only by the number but also by the occupations of its inhabitants. As the residence of the administrative head, the town is inhabited by the landlords, rich and educated, of whom the peasants, who possess small pieces of land, are only farmers. The city also contains men of different callings and origin. The old bourgeois families have to live side by side with the recent immigrants. Amongst these, some come from the suburbs and others from distant provinces who do not give up their provincial dialects and foreign customs.

In the city, independently of the municipal authority, the inhabitants of a particular road or quarter organise committees for protecting the common weal. We should, however, specially mention the existence of professional corporations and regional associations. The first have an exclusive character which bring together men of the same profession. It is accessible only to an apprentice. The faculty of carrying on a profession is connected with the admission into the corporation. The corporation possesses its committee, elected by its associates who regulate the price and the wages. It has also its rules which may be modified at its will. Arbitration is used for effecting conciliation. Boycott is also adopted in order to bring about pressure on a recalcitrant member as well as on an adversary group. The office of the corporation is the place of the meeting

of the committee. The members are assembled there also for their corporate festivities, theatrical representations and the cult of the god who is the protector of the profession. The expenses are met by subscription, which is imposed proportionately to the number of businesses.

The exclusive mind of the corporation is often forced by the fact, that besides the official cult and some sort of worship of the protector of the profession, the members of the corporation form a distinct religious group. These groups abstain from voting. It should be noted, how clever the people belonging to strict environments are in the exercise of their profession and happy in their material prosperity.

The Associations form another important factor of the urban life. They bring together the "country", the compatriots of the same province. When a particular profession is monopolised by the compatriots, they form a body which is both professional and regional. The aim of the Association is to develop social relations and to render mutual assistance in the form of protection of the compatriots, scholarships for study and contribution for funeral expenses.

We have not yet spoken of another social class, which is numerous and powerful and which is the most respected of all, on account of its functions and the mission which it fulfils. It is the class of "the enlightened". These people, who used to be recruited under the Empire by means of literary examinations and who thus represented the intellectual élite of China, supplied the government with officers of all ranks for the civil administration. Now that the Empire does not exist and as China has abolished the literary examinations, the old system has been replaced by another educational system inspired by American and European model. The educated men, however, occupy in the modern society the same place as that of "the enlightened" of the ancient régime. "The enlightened" of ancient times were distinguished from other social classes by certain privileges, like the exemption from tax and corporal punishment. They were considered by the rest of the population, whether they were actual or potential magistrates, as members of a vast corporation which was compact and exclusive. Truly speaking, they were divided into a series of rival groups. In spite of the uniformity of the Confucian doctrine, the contradiction amongst the interested individuals, the solidarity of the family, and the attachment to the land, all went against the moral unity of the class of "the enlightened". But this unity was necessary for the class for its mission of assuring the national cohesion of China, a task which was incumbent on them, as they formed a class of directors and of protectors of the scripture, which was the only connecting link between the local dialects. Sometimes the attachment to the official routine



was overburdened by the loyalty of the "enlightened" official to his government. Moreover, in contradiction to the examples of heroic loyalty, the officials were sometimes compelled to retain their places even after the change of a dynasty, brought about by foreign invasion. Similarly, the peasants neither stopped to cultivate their lands nor the merchants failed to pursue their occupation.

Up till now we have spoken of those social groups which may be called static, because their bases are as solid as those of the family, the neighbour, the profession, and the community of regional origin. These bodies, being multiplied, constituted an *ensemble* of independent groups which were not hierarchichal. But these groups do not contain the whole world and their importance is not the same for all its constituent members.

Amongst the large Chinese mass, by the side of a floating population there is a teeming populace, which has no connecting links. There is a number of professions, which are more or less connected with a vagabond life. In the near past, the transport was the occupation of a very large number of bearers and haulers, on account of the restricted use of mechanical and animal traction. In the absence of any definite statistics, if we rely only on superficial estimates, their number was millions. The vagabond monks, the mendicants, the jugglers, etc., also belong to this mass, which has no fixed domicile.

All big Chinese towns contain a floating and unorganised population consisting of intellectuals, stopped in the middle of their studies, the people with diploma but unemployed, and, above all, the great mass of celebrate proletariat, which is so characteristic of the big Chinese cities. They are without the elementary condition of stability which is implied in the family. With the cult of ancestors, which lighten up from afar the moral horizon of the Chinese, the absence of a family means the giving up of the traditional attitude of life. To this regular army of the disinherited, every catastrophe brought by nature supplies new recruits.

But the wavering masses, which have not been integrated into the family or into the corporation, are not the only centrifugal elements in Chinese society : by their side there always exists the confused wilderness of secret societies. They occupy a special chapter in Chinese history. They are always linked with great public movements. These societies are distinguished by their sectarian, magico-religious character. The origin of each society is connected with a myth, consisting in the introduction, in a historic order, of miraculous elements, which elevate the rôle of the founders of the Sect.<sup>1</sup> The society has its ritual, which is very well applied from admission of the

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1. For example, the origin of the Society of the "Triade" (*T'ien-ti-houei*) is so called, in connection with the war of the Electives. Cf. G. Schlegel, *Thian ti houei*, the Hung League, Batavia, 1866.

novices to the permanent manifestation of their dogmas. The *esprit de corps* of the initiated, as well as their implicit obedience to the wishes of the authorities of the Society, are their two principal duties.

These secret societies, which are counted by hundreds, have dual activity. First comes the individual routine of the sect : the initiation of the novices, the inculcation of discipline among the adepts, the meetings of the executive committee, the esoteric protection of the members themselves. That is effected by the aid of an invisible presence, which intimidates the vulgar, in assuring their obeisance and their discretion. The Secret Society possesses often its special diet or assembly or its particular *morale*, which separates it from the vulgar world, as well as pass-words and rallying-signs.

But there still remains a collective programme, in which is embodied the mysticism of the Sect. It is achieved, when the outside pressure becomes very strong,<sup>1</sup> or when, graced with the friendship of the bases of the established order, the Society reaches the attainment of its happiness. In the programme the social or national renaissances unite intimately with religious aspirations and moral attitudes. This is why a secret society may appear on the political arena as a theocratic attempt ( the insurrection of the Tai-ping in 1850-1861 ).<sup>2</sup>

Because the secret societies have, in many cases, shaken the Empire, and because they remain the army of reserves of all revolutionary movements, they last through the years as a constant element of Chinese life. Sometimes, specially among groups of Chinese emigrants to foreign countries, they take up instead the rôle of some sort of national institution. Jealously and to the opposition of local authorities, they control the aspect of social life of their compatriots. This is why such organisations possess a double aspect : latent forces of revolution, or esoteric substitutions for official institutions.<sup>3</sup>

Among the elements which threaten the traditional organisation of Chinese life, it is necessary to cite the western influences. We do not speak here of a political or social propaganda, conscious or involuntary. The modern technique and the Christian propaganda at first involuntarily sap the material and moral bases of the Chinese family. The western industrial system joins together the units of a proletariat, which in the new conditions vainly try to reproduce the old family traditions. The influence of Christianity goes a smaller way : appealing more to the individual than Buddhism

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1. During the reign of a foreign dynasty the religious side unites with the national aspect, e. g. the anti-Manchu sentiment of the Tai-ping and the anti-foreign feelings of the Boxers.

2. As an apt example of this may be cited the revolt against the Manchu dynasty from the beginning of the 19th century : Cf. J. J. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Prosecution in China*, Amsterdam, 1908.

3. Also such organisations as the bandits, show a tendency to consider their work as some kind of social service and struggle against "the bad government".

or Taoism, which have come to terms with the autonomy of the Chinese family, Christianity enjoins personal loyalty and responsibility. Marriage, presented by the Christians as an act, religious and free, based on the previous and mutual consent of the affianced parties, seems to the Chinese a serious encroachment upon the authority of the family, and, accordingly, a moral danger. A few individuals who, by their very superficial contact with Christianity, do not resume the habit of a new moral discipline, based on the individual responsibility, become new elements of a social disintegration.

In resuming the review of the constituent elements of Chinese Society, we may affirm, that viewed as a whole it does not present any trait of uniformity. At first, the hierarchical system, vertical, so to speak, of the family, is independent of the equality system, that is horizontal, of the professional body. The macrocosm-empire and the microcosm-family are governed after the hereditary principle, while all the administration is recruited by means of the examinations. The regional particularism is counterbalanced by the government politics, which lays down, that a mandarin should not exercise his functions over his native province. Established religions, like Buddhism or Taoism, do not have, nor have they been singly charged with, such influence on a society, so deeply attached to the family principle. The task of maintaining the moral union of China was then in the charge of the lettered class, entirely lay and civil.

The family, local authorities, the neighbourhood, the guilds are autonomous bodies which function independently of political conditions. None of these elements is superfused on others : each in its scope of action is competent, efficacious and responsible : the family governs the house, the corporation and the neighbourhood control the work and by their mutual aid the state directs the administration and the politics, the clergy is active in its contacts with the superior world, while the mission of the monarchy is the consolidation and the consecration of the universal order. Such a state of things procures to the Chinese civilisation that elastic solidity which is manifested in the gift of spontaneous regenerations after catastrophes, seemingly irreparable. The most exposed element in the Chinese system, the state, has the least strength of resistance against internal revolts or external attacks, and it sometimes succumbs, but in the catastrophe the other domains of Chinese life are not necessarily touched. All these elements : the family, the neighbourhood, the corporation, the clergy, the administration are not strictly co-ordinated, but, if they converge on one and the same individual, then they modify each other naturally. And it is only then, that one may have a glimpse of a certain hierarchy, if not of the factors, at least of the attitudes, placed face to face with them : family or social considerations appeal more strongly than political works.

All these elements, in spite of their lack of consideration, have some factors of social conservation, because they bring together men, who serve their established interests, material or moral. But in their heart of hearts there are other forces, groups, not on the principle of the defence of their interests, but in the name of social aspirations or ungratified ambitions. These forces have something in them that is remarkably dynamic,

The Chinese Revolution, which, however, does not seem to have said the last word, possesses a character so profound, that the ancient regime has been attacked on all fronts at the same time, both by the political and social programme of the revolutionaries, and by the modern technique and the western education. When one ignores the literary models and the cudgelling that went on for some years before the Revolution, the sort of the Empire is already judged. After the crumbling of the imperial administration, China seems to dissociate itself into a chaos of independent principalities, where, in spite of civil strifes, the new aspects of the Chinese civilisation did not cease to develop themselves. The Chinese school system, reconstructed in the revolutionary turmoil, endows China with a leading class, armed with modern instruction.

It is necessary, then, that China should pursue a new ideal, social, moral and political at the same time, so that the reconstruction of the national unity may be commenced. In spite of the results, obtained up to date, it is yet premature, because of the amplitude of the touch, to make any pronouncements on the subject. One thing is certain, that is, in arming the whole of China with a modern intellectual machinery one ignores that immense human experience, which is the Chinese civilisation, many milleniums old.

Conditions in China of yesterday do not respond to those of the State in the West, although one has tried to evaluate them to the detriment of China's interests, in presenting before the international areopagus the thesis, that China is less a State than a geographical conception. Also the tendency of the Chinese Government to raise the dignity or importance of the State and of the Government in the national life, though that would be against the Chinese ways, is above all a defensive army against the employment of powerful foreigners.

We do not discuss here, whether the Chinese State, endowed with the pluralistic nature of its institutions, is a State in a European and somewhat strict sense of the term. In any case, it is just the pluralistic nature, which allows it to continue, even in worse political conditions, to develop the different aspects of national life. It is this nature which allows it to be, always and before all, a great civilisation.

## INDIA AND CHINA

India ! O India !!

Remember thy ancient friend, thy brother-nation, across  
the Himalayas,  
claiming same age, same spirit, same life of piety.

Never yet was seen or heard on this globe  
such incomparable bond of fellowship,  
unbroken through the milleniums.  
Ye met, not as rivals on the battlefield,  
each claiming the monopoly of tyranny on this earth,  
but as noble friends, rejoicing in the exchange of  
valued gifts.

To thee my love, my greetings !

India ! O India !!

Full of chaos still is the world, where men grope  
blindly in dark terror.  
Thine be the right and of thy suffering friend  
across the Himalayas,  
to show them light and lead them along the way  
of righteousness.  
Thine the difficult duty and of thy friend,  
to pilot them through the sea of storm and horror,  
to the shores of peace and piety.  
Awake then thou, arise and be prepared,  
to march along, side by side, hand in hand,  
hearkening to the stern voice of truth,  
and shoulder the burden of a mad,  
riotous world.  
My love to thee, to thee my gratitude.

Tan Yun-Shan.



*By Nandalal Bose*



# INDIAN TARIFF POLICY AND THE TRADE AGREEMENTS

( *Ottawa and bilateral* )

J. D. S. Paul, Ph.D. (London).

"AFTER this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands ; . . . and one of the elders answered saying unto me, what are these which are arrayed in white robes ? And whence came they ? . . . And he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb . . . and serve Him day and night in His temple . . . They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." *The Book of the Revelation of St. John.*

IN universal History, Empires are nothing strange and across the centuries, they tend to repeat themselves as a phenomenon of heroic achievement, grow like an organism, steadily decay and resolve themselves into forms ever anew. On a planet where octopus is common, its all-embracing vicious qualities do not create alarm. All we have to do is to test its survival value, assuming that octopus has Mind, balancing nicely between self-interest and altruism. Charters of Joint Stock Companies have that octopus quality of force and fraud. It took three centuries for the chartered companies of the Elizabethan Age, to assume the form of the full-fledged Empire of the Victorian era. In spite of the warnings of History, 'the Boston Tea Party', South Africa, India and the Irish Free State, the task of Imperial Economic Unity has acted hypnotically, blinding most statesmen as to the enormous sacrifices incurred in building and maintaining "the Commonwealth of British Nations" by unwilling members and unequal partners.

By Imperial Preference, the great exponents of Free Trade mean, the widest possible free trade within this Commonwealth,—a thin way of disguising the right of an industrialised power to protect its markets against rival powers,—and preferential trade with less developed Dominions and Colonies. Free Trade, preferential or otherwise, implies free migration which is resented. Rival powers thus create new Empires lest they perish.

The Ottawa Trade Agreements have therefore to be viewed from three aspects.

- ( 1 ) The economic changes in the modern world.
- ( 2 ) The relation of the Empire to the Great Powers.
- ( 3 ) The Position of India within the Empire.



A mere economic study of the Trade Agreements does not clarify the issues involved—the political and economic destinies of its component parts in relation to existing and emergent Empires arising from the struggle for markets. Wars have a destructive and a constructive face that teaches nothing permanent through our short memories. Unless the Commonwealth is looked upon as the greatest stable single political unit, inter-dependent and capable of ministering to the highest wants of civilised men, no trade agreement can be profitable. All forms of industry involve the hopes and aspirations, the entire outlook and philosophy of men, for the purpose of industry is the satisfaction of the physical and spiritual needs of men. Without the good will of the consumer, no commodity can be marketed. The economics of Khaddar is charged with not merely the demand for clothing but the use of enforced leisure of agricultural communities and the higher destiny of the spirit of the craftsman. It is therefore an issue of the most serious magnitude whether India can be made for ever a part of a completely alien set of factors, racial, cultural, political and economic.

The stage reached by the industrial nations of the West is beyond India's present expectations, much more so in the economic than in political field. The superlative skill of the Germans and Americans created mass production out of power driven industries, transforming on their own soil at every stage the raw material into finished products on the largest scale. Their industrial stability is based on world markets for surplus produce and internal rationalisation. The U. S. A. is a geographic unit, absorbing North and South America while Europe is another. France shattered the Germanic Central European customs union. Russia is a great single powerful economic unit. When she started making China unsuitable for capitalistic exploitation, Imperial Japan created Manchukuo and China is being absorbed. The last war left as its legacy, inter-allied debts, concentration of gold in France and the U. S. A., high tariff walls that render trade inequitable and the unconscionable burden of debt payments, and a competitive race for armaments ! America has over £2500,000,000 in gold. Re-distribution of gold is a necessity to circumvent world-wide socialism or dictatorships.

Great Britain's only weapon in order to veer America around towards a bilateral treaty is to create closed empire markets. Delicate negotiations have just begun over the most-favoured-nation clause. But British colonies would be vitally affected, even to the extent of rendering all previous arrangements futile when tariff rates are scaled down to suit the U. S. A., in agricultural goods such as wheat, cotton, meat or fruits, machinery and manufactured goods.

In 1930 exports from the U.S.A. to Great Britain were \$678,000,000, from Australia \$76,000,000, South Africa \$38,000,000, New Zealand \$30,000,000,

Irish Free State \$14,000,0000, Canada \$847,442,037. Theoretically, Canada is British, but economically it is the outhouse of the U. S. A. Thanks to the tariff policy, over 1,000 American branch-plants have rooted themselves in Canadian soil, since 1897. It is a serious question as to how far the U. S. A. would be able to capture the lacunæ created by the empire trade preference involving her in retaliatory tariffs. It is a question whether the colonies and India would be wise to jeopardise the course of their trade. India has certainly been vitally affected as could be seen by examining the trade before the war with the European continent and the Far East, and her prolonged acute economic depression.

Since the war, the wide disparity in expansion and prices between agricultural commodities and manufactured products has in no small measure contributed to serious disturbance in business enterprise and accentuated world depression. The way out is internal re-organisation so as to minimise fluctuation, for fluctuations benefit only the middleman. Rising prices seldom fully benefit the producer. The consumer pays for it. A fall in wholesale prices scarcely touches the fringe of retail prices, but is fully felt by the producer. These factors have led to very important organisations in the economic sphere in all the Dominions and Great Britain, such as Imperial Shipping Committee, the Economic Committee, the Colonial Marketing Board, Control Boards for Meat, Dairying, Fruit Trade, Committees for Rubber, Cotton, Tea, Jute, and other schemes for improving the marketing of graded produce.

The crux of the matter lies here : in analysing the export and import trade of India since the War, one finds that the rates of preference proposed, the commodities selected, and the method adopted for preference, by raising the existing rates against non-British goods or lowering the rates on British goods, are likely to lead to ( 1 ) the possibility of retarding nascent industries, ( 2 ) the possibility of a fall in the customs revenue, ( 3 ) the possibility of an added burden on the consumer, in the interests of the producer and the wholesale dealer, ( 4 ) the possibility of retaliation or fall in the trade with non-British countries which now take the bulk of Indian raw materials.

Now 60% of Indian exports are to non-British lands and 40% only within the Empire. The standard of raw materials produced in India has not risen, because the quality of the masses of the people remains stationary and they cannot be expected to improve without considerable investment in a type of mass education that will enable them to realise the causes of their low productivity and their chronic heavy indebtedness.

The colonies are our competitors in raw materials. Rice of a better sort in quantity and quality per acre is now produced in Indo-Siam, China, Japan, the Phillipines, Australia and Italy. The Empire absorbs 50% of Indian rice

of a thousand varieties suited to a deteriorated soil. Punjab wheat competes with Canada and Australia. Indian raw cotton found its best market in Japan and Germany: the Lancashire machinery is not adapted to an increased use of Indian cotton. With a century old effort in the improvement of its quality through hybrid seeds, the bulk of the output is yet short and medium staple.

Jute is the only monopoly that requires no preference anywhere. Indian Tea is principally a British owned industry. The preference to tanned hides and skins is a substantial gain since the post-war change in the market for these goods. But even in this commodity, the urgent need is to improve internal manufacture. Certainly Britain is not our principal market. In oil-seeds, the Dominions and Argentine are competitors with India and the Continental countries have been the principal buyers. Preference to Indian pig-iron, semi-finished steel and lead will help to expand a very important key industry, but expansion of engineering industries in India alone can give India the status of a really manufacturing country.

State purchase of manufacture in India of all railway materials, including locomotives, bridge materials and all accessories of transport and power supply will rapidly confer what trade negotiation never can. We are not economically equal to be free negotiating partners. The vastness of India and its resources in raw materials have too often a tendency to create blindness as to the reality of a low stage in economic development. India offers the peculiar panorama of every stage of economic and social evolution side by side. Its social and political organisation has scarcely begun to realise its insufficiency in production, and inequality in distribution.

On the side of imports from Great Britain, preference to "boots and shoes, brushes, metal buttons, cordage and rope, cork manufactures, cutlery, leather, cloth, soap, toilet requisites, toys, umbrellas, perfumes, ale, beer, cocoa, chocolate, confectionery, tinned or canned fish, bottled fruit, paint solutions . . . chemical drugs and medicines, earthenware and porcelain, furniture and cabinet ware, paper and stationery, rubber tyres and other manufactures of rubber" are damaging to Indian interests as Indian enterprise would have to be definitely directed along these lines. If the policy adopted by India is one of discriminating protection, the industries that have had a start on account of the momentum given by the pressure of war time demands could not at this stage be exposed to competition from highly organised and efficient industries of British or non-British origin.

The best argument that there is for Ottawa is to test the same by its results on the country as a whole; the results are negative so far as India is concerned, with unpegging the sterling from gold, and its attendant evil, flight of partly distress gold from this country, partly speculatively, and to

adjust balance of payments, for the first time in Indian history, since 1931 of over 274 crores at market rates for bullion, retarding the hope of developing a sound independent banking system free of the City of London ; and a greater evil is the subordination of India to Britain and her colonies, through the preponderance of Great Britain in regulating India's import trade. A nation producing raw materials for export requires to buy cheap and sell dear and also steer clear of the Plantation economy. A starving nation cannot gloat over exports or imports. They reveal only the weakness of our economic structure, its lack of diversification of employment and the slow pace of industrial development.

The last War revealed the flimsy character of Indian industrial development. The Indian Munitions Board whose invaluable experience could have been utilised for a Board of Industry and Trade for Indian industrial development was dissolved and the great momentum for a greater India allowed to vanish like "the baseless fabric of a vision." Once and for all, the balance between industrial Europe and "raw-material" Asia has been disturbed, as well as the placid content of its apathetic people. Political unrest is merely a symptom of a deep-seated economic malaise. The rise of Japan as the industrial leader of Asia, instead of being a warning to develop naval bases in the Pacific, should have been a stimulus to the industrial development of China and India. China is now lost to Japanese enterprise. The concept of a Chinese market leading to a partition amongst the great powers turned out to be moonshine.

The logic of necessity should turn British commercial policy in India to examine the import Trade of India and to regulate Tariffs through a permanent Board of Trade with tariff experts and industrial engineers, regulating the flow of manufactured hardware, plant and machinery, finished commodities of daily consumption, with the sole object of inducing their manufacture in this country.

The fear of fall in the customs revenue is illusory, compared to the possible growth of wealth and employment in this hungry land. The tariff policy of the U. S. A. and Germany over half a century furnishes an instructive parallel. Duties on spare parts of all hardware, eg., machinery or motor-cars and sewing machines, cycles and typewriters, should it be far lower than that of the finished article, will lead to vast assembling industries, developing technical skill in the labouring class who would in a fairly short time be competent to produce all forms of finished articles in this country. Costs of production as now considered by the Tariff Board is a fictitious theory of comparing the capacity of an elephant with that of an ant. Industrial integration, so lacking today, would follow and ease the burden of the commercial city population on the patient backs of the peasant.

Where this cannot be achieved, the only other possibility is that of harnessing the over-weary villager, inspiring him with the antiquated idea of subsidiary village industries and an intensive "Buy Indian" campaign. The campaign for "Buy Indian", logically, consistently and continuously pursued, is the one sane policy for a subjected race whose economic life is ever thwarted by forces which they cannot aspire to control constitutionally. If it is possible to fix a ratio for the rupee, there is no reason why a ratio should not be fixed between Indian raw cotton and Lancashire manufactured goods and resolve trade into barter, at select centres. We cannot touch the ratio but we can develop honest and sound indigenous banks with a large gold reserve and a banking policy broadly conceived as to relate itself to internal industrial development, largely of small scale power-driven industries in the countryside which meet the constant necessities of the consumer.

Every province has to adopt measures for a planned economy. Locking up capital in import and export trade, and large deposits in European Banks and enterprise because of our mismanagement the merchant class walked into the mouth of the lion. A constructive concerted policy on the part of the Indian Chambers of Commerce, for the development of towns and villages industrially and socially, would go a long way, while negative criticism of the policy pursued by Government will only fritter away their enegry. The message of a century of our economic history is that of untold and unmerited suffering through the shocks given to our economic structure from piece-meal efforts in economic improvement, inspired by interests that have held India as a market for manufactured goods. An expenditure of three crores on roads may bring the American motor lorry, and millions of landless bullock cartmen will be displaced. The gain may only be to the trade in overstocked hides and skins and the beef market but the loss to the country side is permanent.

A land of small villages require a balanced statesmanship that every transition absorbs the people in other spheres. The purely agriculturally prosperous countries are in the realm of mythology and belong to the ages prior to steam and machinery. The producer of agricultural commodities must first think of his own consumption and live at the marginal level of subsistence through his annual increase in numbers, unless there are in the immediate proximity large industrialised and machine minding communities, willing to consume the produce of the peasants and have the purchasing power to pay for them. The co-operative paradise of Denmark depends on British Isles, Scandinavia and Germany, and forms one economic bloc with them. The case of India is different. She has been an economic entity by herself and will tend to be so in the future unless external coercive factors intervene to thwart the process.

## A TURKISH LADY ON INDIA\*

C. C. Dutt

MADAME HALIDE is today a well-known figure in European literary circles. Some years ago, her memoirs, published in English, created a stir and drew lavish praise from competent critics. The well-known Swedish writer, F. Book, wrote of her :

“One must search for a long time among European women of fame to find any figure which can bear comparison with Halidé Edib.”

A Turkish lady, who had in her day taken part in the national uprising in her own country, Madame Halidé is undoubtedly modern in her education and outlook, but possesses a heart full of sincere sympathy for the age-old, and slow-moving peoples of her native Orient. She is not one of those arrogant parvenus, who from the lofty pinnacle of their own emancipation look down upon their hapless fellows still toiling in the mire.

*Inside India* is, indeed, a remarkable book. A note of deep and heartfelt sympathy runs through it from the first page to the last. Yet nowhere has the writer blindly shut her eyes to India's faults. She has not sought to minimise in any way the defects inherent in the Indian character. But where she has cited a fault, she has done so in sincere sorrow and tender sympathy, as a loving sister would do. India has sinned deeply in the past, and must in patience go through the inevitable period of expiation. No one is more conscious of this than the Indian himself. But in this her dark hour of shame and tribulation, India, sick at heart, is not in a mood to appreciate preaching pedagogues from other lands. Even a coarse libeller, a 'drain-inspectress', is preferable to a smug self-satisfied pedagogue. The light-hearted, though honest, banter of a 'jesting pilate' is no less humiliating to the sensitive Indian than the preaching of the school-master, or the slander of the 'drain inspectress'. But visitors such as Halidé, with the loving and soothing touch of a sister of mercy, are ever welcome to the bed-side of the sick.

One thing we note with gratification is that the book under review is not concerned with propaganda of any kind, political or religious. Of propaganda books on India, there has been a rich crop of late years. On the one hand, we have had politically minded Anglo-phobes masquerading as Indo-philés and advocating in almost violent language absolute freedom

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\* The above article was originally written as a review for the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, of Halidé Edib's recent book, *Inside India* (George Allen & Unwin). Its interest, we hope, justifies us in publishing it as an article.—*Ed.*

for India. On the other, we have had paid agents of a reactionary bureaucracy, preaching caution and moderation to the already over-cautious Indian. Likewise, one class of interested writers has carried on a regular campaign against the ignorance and social degradation of the Hindu and has inferred therefrom his unfitness for self-rule; while another class has gone into raptures over the superior spirituality of the Hindu, and seen signs of his greatness even in things obviously narrow and sordid.

We are glad, Halidé Edib is not an advocate or partism of any party or community in India. She is as much a friend of India as of England, and has not permitted herself to be carried away either by British prejudice or by Indian sentiment. Likewise, though a Moslem by religion, she has not allowed herself to be influenced by the political outlook of the Moslem communalist in India. She has observed things for herself, exchanged ideas with men and women of all parties and come to certain conclusions of her own. She states that she has taken the great Alberuni as her master, and that her ambition is to leave as truthful and objective an account of her period as Alberuni has done of his. Modestly she says :

"Quality is God's own gift, but every artist, however small, may attempt to cast in some humble material a figure already chiselled and carved in marble and gold by great artists."

The writer defines thus her mental attitude towards England and towards India in the Preface.

"... England, a people I have known since very early life, a culture which has formed me side by side with my own, a country where I have lived for more than four years, not counting the numerous visits made at different periods."

"I felt India to be nearer to my Soul-Climate than any other country not my own. It was not merely because I am a Muslem and there are Muslems in India. Even among Hindu friends ... I felt entirely at home. And it is this sense of belonging in a spiritual sense which has made me take the liberty of writing about Indians so freely."

The author visited India in 1935 on a lecturing tour at the invitation of Dr. Ansari on behalf of the Moslem University, Jamia-Milia-Islamia, of Delhi. That was her first direct contact with India. She describes in a charming manner how, prior to this, ever since childhood, a variety of incidents had given her occasional romantic glimpses of this country and its peoples, past and present. She had met Dr. Ansari before in Turkey, during the Balkan War, and had been greatly impressed by him at that time. But he had seemed to her to be like any other humanitarian doctor, and he spoke very little of his own motherland. In Europe she had come across other Indians too, from time to time, but they had failed to give her a clear picture of India. What they said, taken together, lacked coherence: "Thousands of sounds, no harmony. It was like the tuning stage of a great orchestra a symphony nation."

In Bombay and on the way to Delhi, Halidé Begum began to visualize the real India. She enjoyed the human side of Bombay, but the architecture disappointed her. "Candy-box fussiness and ornament—the conception of a European reader of the *Arabian Nights*, who takes it as typical of the whole Orient." At Delhi, Dr. Ansari and the Jamia-Milia group received her with shouts of 'Allah Akbar'. She realised that this cry, which in her native Turkey was a solemn call to prayer, meant in India a hearty cheer. Not quite that, we venture to think. The newly awakened Moslem community in India has adopted 'Allah Akbar' as its militant war-cry. It is a call to action and sacrifice in the interest of Islam, and, as such, according to it, the most suitable greeting to a daughter of Turkey.

At Delhi, Halidé stayed in the house of Dr. Ansari, Dar-es-Salam. In 1935 this house was the central meeting place of all who worked for India's political salvation. As Halidé describes it, "The Congress flag waves overhead. It is an historical place; but to my mind its present significance is greater than its past . . . The ancient, the mediaeval, and the modern came together: the ideas and aspirations of divergent personalities meet, coalesce, and the personalities disperse to set in motion new trends everywhere. In the free India of the future, that house will be one of the principal landmarks in its making."

The clever authoress had thus a rare opportunity here of meeting various types of Indian patriots and of coming to some conclusion with regard to India's political future. The words "free India of the future" quoted above and the sentence, "To all appearances Indian Independence may not come in Dr. Ansari's life-time," on p. 29, would seem to indicate what those conclusions were.

One characteristic of the book is a series of most delightful pen-pictures of men and women of note whom the author met in India. The first of such pictures depicting her host and hostess appears in Chapter I.

"Above all, she ( Mrs. Ansari ) did not feel Muslims to be an alien race, a minority grafted on Indian soil, and doomed to remain as such. She was Indian to the core. Asoka was a part of her past history as much as Humayun or Babur."

Later on, we have portraits of Mahatmaji, the Frontier Gandhi, Dr. Bhagwandas of Benares, Begum Shah Nawaz, Sarojini Naidu, Lady Hydari and many others. Every one of these is vivid and life-like, drawn in bold lines and to an accurate perspective. But there is no crude realism about them. Delicate colouring by a master's hand saves them from that, and invests them with an atmosphere of romance and poetry. One or two there are that may be called cartoons. But even in these there is not the least desire to bring the subject to ridicule. We give one example of this. On page 90, speaking of Maulana Shaukat Ali, she says ;



"I find it difficult to define his present political position. . . . He is a very big man in every sense. . . has a flowing beard, a shock of picturesque grey hair, and eyes which twinkle like those of a mischievous boy. His dress is suggestive of the vagueness of his politics. He wears a long shirt over tight Indian trousers and leggings and a loose Arab Mashlak with a Turkish Kalpak. . . ."

Mahatma Gandhi has been portrayed with unique reverence.

"He is so important a happening in twentieth-century history . . . that every witness must bear as objective and honest a report as is humanly possible."

And she goes on to devote page after page to Mahatmaji, depicting him from various points of view and produces a picture worthy not only of a great artist but of an epoch-making subject. Two little extracts we make that have struck us as remarkable.

"As the face bent forward there appeared a baldish dome with a Hindu lock, a tiny curl on the top of it. . . . The head in that bent position reminded me of a picture of Chingiz Khan. The same top curl, the bald head and the delicate and narrow temples."—" . . . Does Mahatma Gandhi mean the opening of a new era? Otherwise why should he be so much loved by millions, and revered by the Intelligentsia of this materialistic world of ours? For the moment Mahatma Gandhi revived my faith in the infallibility of the better nature of Man. Not only Gandhi, but the Indian masses who take sides with this ancient type of leader who represents love, seemed to me worthy of the world's gratitude."

Two things in India surprised the author very much. One is that a man of Mahatmaji's type with his ideal of truth and non-violence should have acquired such immense influence in India in this age. For, says she, "No one in our age, or since the days of saints and prophets, has taken the fancy of the masses, because of his resemblance to the good." Another is the spread of the idea of a single nationhood for India on the North-Western Frontier, even among the Tribes. "The figure which symbolizes this conception on the Frontiers was Abdul Gaffur Khan." Politico-religious movements are common enough among the Tribes, but the uniqueness of Abdul Gaffur Khan's movement lay, above all, in its non-violence. Non-violence is indeed a curious phenomenon among a people who can easily procure arms and know how to use them, who can always elude the enemy and harass him in the midst of their high and deep ravines.

In the opinion of the writer, the late Dr. Ansari and Abdul Gaffur Khan represent two fundamental principles in Islam.

"With Dr. Ansari it was Democracy. . . . The salient point . . . is the refusal to admit race basis in nationhood. . . . the second trend in Islam—Socialism. Abdul Gaffur Khan is a Socialist—a moderate and liberal one. He also deems Socialism the only political creed compatible with Islam."

The writer quotes Pandit Jawaharlal with approval :

"The Muslem rank and file has more potentiality than the Hindu masses, and is likely to go ahead faster in a Socialist direction once it gets moving."

Apparently it has got moving now !

The last chapter of the book deals with the British, the third element in the human triangle in India.

"The hundred thousand Englishmen ruling over 350 million Indians have meant the triumph of the West with its technique, material civilization and moral backbone"—"a force still to be reckoned with."

We agree with the dictum, but what we find difficult to accept is that the "eventual shape of India depends largely on the attitude of the British Government. Socialism, Nationalism, Communalism, One Nation, Two Nations, etc., will be affected by the favour or disfavour of the British Government." It has never been so in the history of any other country. A nation has always been able to secure the form of Government it has wanted. We are inclined to think that the other two corners of the triangle, if they so desire it unitedly, will be able to persuade the third corner to fall in line with them.

It is generally believed that it is to England's interest to have at her side as a friend, a strong, united and free India. Many people think that England will ultimately be convinced of this. But our authoress is not so sure. She formulates the question : "Will she give complete independence to India and enlist her on her side in the coming fray ?" but does not answer it. "No one can tell," she says, "what the British attitude in India will be." We agree.

Like Halidé Edib, we advise our reader to "look at the clues of the Indian Puzzle and reason out as best as he can."

However, that is neither here nor there, for this Turkish lady did not set out to write a political treatise. She once told Lord Willingdon that she was going to write a book called "Indian Portraits", and she has done so, though under another name. Political theorising is really outside its scope. But, in addition to portraits of individuals, she has given us a series of splendid pictures of scenes, of landscapes and of groups of men. Beautifully composed they are, some elaborately tinted, some in monochrome, some dim and mystic, some gorgeously bright, but all inspired by the brightest idealism. This is about the Taj Mahal :

"The Taj itself, as seen from the terrace of the palace, looked like a gigantic heap of soap bubbles lighted with mother-of-pearl tints in the blue void."

"It was dark . . . I sat . . . and watched the slow rise of the moon lighting the white dome . . . slowly giving relief to the mass of whiteness. . . . It had a strange poignancy, this wonder of the world, symbolizing the devotion of man to woman throughout the ages. . . . The thing gave us restfulness and peace. I had stepped out of the range of local influence of any kind, be it of race, religion, or style in art. The spectacle defied intellectual analysis and was beyond sentimentality. . . . At the moment, what mattered most to me with regard to Taj was being a leitmotiv in the great Indian symphony."

Here is a picture of the gathering in Mahatma Gandhi's room for evening prayer :

"The music of the strings trailed on, and the whole crowd, the whole place, even the man who looked like Buddha dissolved in it. I had heard nothing like it in all my life. Beethoven at times reaches a height where one is no longer harassed by emotion, but aware only of a serene intellectuality. This tune not only lacks the disturbance of emotion, but freed one from one's body."

At Benares the author met a crowd of lowly Moslems who impressed her deeply.

"There were perhaps a hundred or more souls, mostly humble artisans and traders. Modest, diffident and shy . . . They were all poorly clad. . . They all had a lonely and indescribably sad expression. I spoke to them for twenty minutes. . . There was an intensesness, solemnity and gravity about them which they communicated to the atmosphere and to us all. . . Of all the Muslems I have met in India and elsewhere the best and saintliest could not have impressed me as they did."

The contrast between Hindu Benares, its gay, festive and holiday air, and the lonely, sad look of this handful of Muslems must have moved the author deeply. It shows that in spite of all her analytical faculties and keen insight, Halidé Edib has a romantic and emotional mind. The little incident at Lahore related on page 139 only confirms what we say. India has now a definite claim on her sympathy through her little Punjabi god-daughter.

In three separate chapters, the author has dealt with the adjustments that India generally, the Hindu community and the Moslem community respectively, are undergoing face to face with the forces of the present age. Her observations are detailed and well-considered, and well worth the careful perusal of every Indian.

The chapter on Calcutta will probably interest the Bengali reader. According to Halidé Edib, "the Bengal temperament is the pepper and salt to Indian thought and action", but she is inclined to the opinion that the political centre of gravity has now definitely shifted to Delhi and the Frontier. She admits, however, that "whatever is happening in New India has been influenced, directly or indirectly, by the modern movements which have taken place in Calcutta."

But, alas, that is an old story !

## REVIEWS

THE POETRY OF THE INVISIBLE: by Syed Mehdi Imam, M.A. (Oxon.)

An Interpretation of the Major English Poets from Keats to

Bridges. With a Preface by C. F. Andrews.

George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1937.

THE highly intellectual pretensions of this book will not satisfy the intelligent reader. Dealing with English poetry of the 19th century it represents literary criticism of a peculiar, although not quite a new, kind. Anyone acquainted with contemporary literary criticism and its numerous branches in Mysticism, Occultism, and Psychism, will not be surprised to hear that "the world of Spirit is a deep mystery" ( Preface ) ; it is that kind of "mystery" that pervades all pseudo-scientific books or treatises on whatever subject ; a "mystery" which is frequently brought about intentionally, so as to create some impression upon the reader ; and, I am afraid, many naive and unprejudiced readers will gladly accept this "mystery", for the simple reason that readers at present are open to all kinds of suggestions, and the more absurd and extravagant those suggestions are the more readily will they be accepted.

There is, however, another point in the Preface of Mr. C. F. Andrews that arouses our attention ; he, in fact, suggests that Mr. S. M. Imam's stay at Oxford, where he went to school and where he took his Degree, as well as his intimate connection with old Indian culture and tradition, particularly qualified him "to present the English poets, whom he has chosen, from his own Eastern standpoint." This, of course, makes the book even more attractive to the general reader. But going carefully through the 12 rather elaborate chapters, it will hardly be possible for anyone acquainted with Hindu traditional theories to find any "Eastern standpoint" at all. And the bewildered reader will have to go back to the West, and especially to the "Western standpoint" expounded by writers like Annie Besant, Dr. Arundale, H. Blavatsky, C. W. Leadbeater, Sinnet,—names which by no means should be connected either with the traditional East or the traditional West, but which, if I may say so, represent a "school of thought" composed of the most heterogeneous elements, a pseudo-religion, a pseudo-science, a pseudo-sociology, and now, at last, a pseudo-literary criticism. As this incongruous mixture of contradictory elements—of which we shall presently give some instances—is something foreign and unintelligible to a normally working human brain, we may, by way of introduction, quote the author's

own conclusion, that matter (and especially the subject-matter of this book) is but "a soap-bubble blown of emptiness."

I do not exactly know what Mr. C. F. Andrews meant by "Eastern standpoint"; a few general ideas which we find in the book and especially in the very first chapter, may elucidate his remark: the book attempts to give an "explanation of the psychic powers latent in mankind", it also tries to interpret the idea of evolution—that of humanity in general and of poetry in particular—(the recurrence of the number seven inevitably leads us back to Adyar), it rejuvenates (especially in the case of Shelley) the conception of Karma, it deals in great length with the so-called "transcendent Materialism", particularly stressing the importance of "radio-activity, wavelengths, the fourth dimension (or the seventh)—theosophists themselves are not quite clear which one they mean—atoms and electrons, substance, and the invisible law of materialisation." Mr. Imam's "Eastern standpoint"—and that will after the first chapter already be clear to most of the readers—has nothing whatever to do with East; all his ideas are taken over from the West, and especially from those "spiritual leaders" of the West, who do not by any means represent Western culture at all, but only some peculiar deviation of its inherited and traditional cultural goods.

Mr. S. M. Imam's book has not only "metaphysical" pretensions, but literary ones as well; a short survey of his literary criticism seems, therefore, to be necessary. As his "literary" theories are based upon the principles of theosophism, a critical approach to his book is difficult for anyone who takes the study of literature seriously and who is very well aware of the great number of incoherent attempts to "interpret" literature in some "new" way. Most of these books never evaluate or even appreciate literature; lack of discrimination and deliberate distortion of the plain meaning of poetry are their most distinctive features. The literary critic no longer chooses sensibilities representative for a period of poetic creation, but he only tries to apply his critical preconceptions (in Mr. Imam's case those of Theosophism in general) to a certain number of poets. In the same way his selection seems to be singularly lacking comprehension; neither the metaphysical poets of the 17th century nor Blake—both outstanding as far as their relation with the "invisible" is concerned—are mentioned in his book. It seems somehow too easy to find implications of a deeper and "psychic" kind in 19th century poetry, especially in the case of Shelley and the late Victorians, although, I believe, most of Mr. Imam's implications are somewhat gratuitous and irrelevant. His book as a whole is full of speculative elaborations divorced from experience. Things remain in the dark throughout the book. Free and active intelligence and inquiry have no place there. The reader has to accept indiscriminately preposterous statements, such as: "Shelley senses the subtle

body of luminous matter. With Byron we reach the inner worlds of rare substance" ( p. 37 ). He is also forced to believe that there is "mediumistic slumber" in Keat's *Endymion* and "spirit-materialization" in his *Lamia* ( p. 46 ) : as for Keats' "interpenetrating planes of mystic sight" ( p. 43 ), and the "psychic communication" which he has in common with Mrs. Blavatsky ( p. 46 ). Shelley's "luminous wings circling through etheric matter" ( p. 53 ), Tennyson's "secret cycles" ( p. 92 ), Browning's "Over-Soul or monad of mysticism" ( "not to be confused with the Soul-Bodies" ) ( p. 109 ), Abercrombie's "imaginative play of the cosmic consciousness" ( p. 141 ), and Hardy's "Materialization" ( p. 158 ), they all lead to the same kind of "psychic" nebulosity composed of "Time and Space, matter and motion, proton and electron", and they invariably lead the reader to a deep and peaceful slumber undisturbed by the eccentricities and extravagances of Mr. Imam's "Eastern standpoint".

The "poetry of the invisible" is nothing new to the student of literature; it is to be found in all great poetry in Europe from Dante and Shakespeare to Blake and Baudelaire. The *interpretation* of the Invisible in poetry has been attempted here; whether this representation of 19th century English poetry is a successful attempt to penetrate into the world of spirit, seems after all doubtful. All we can say is, that the book will most probably attract the attention of all those interested in literary matters.

A. Aronson, B.A. ( Cantab ), Ph.D.

GANESA : a monograph of the elephant-faced god, by Alic Getty.

Introduction by Alfred Foucher. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1936.

Pp. 102, Plates 41.

Gaṇeśa and Hayagrīva, two divinities of the Brahmanical Hindu pantheon, have common traits of character in their composition. Both these gods have their anthropomorphic forms ; the origin of both of them is veiled in obscurity ; both of them, whatever might have been their real nature, came to be regarded at subsequent periods of their history, as gods of wisdom ( the former as also a god of success ), though their respective original traits of character were not fully lost sight of ; both of them were adopted as secondary deities of importance by the Buddhists ; and lastly, both of them penetrated into the distant countries of the extreme orient as well as into the lands of Indonesia, along with the spread of Brahmanical Hinduism and especially Buddhism in those far-away regions. It is no wonder then that these two divinities should attract the attention of able scholars who would try to investigate into their origins, their gradual development not only in the environment of their original sphere but also

in their newer surroundings when they were included in the pantheon of another cult of the same culture area, as also their migration into distant countries and their inclusion into the ritual and mythology of those lands. The recent publication of the monograph on Hayagriva by R. H. Van Gulik and the present treatise on Gaṇeśa by Alice Getty substantiate the remark made above.

Miss Getty is a scholar of international repute who has already made her mark by her previous publications, one of the most important of which being her well-documented and illustrated monograph on *'The Gods of Northern Buddhism'* (Oxford, 1914). Her previous experience in researches of iconographic character have stood her well in the fulfilment of her present task. This work on Gaṇeśa has been well-planned by the author who has divided her subject into eight chapters. The first three chapters deal with Gaṇeśa in his Indian environments, in which such questions as the origin of this elephant-faced divinity, early references to him in Indian literature, his iconography as outlined by Hindu texts and images, his sculptural and pictorial representations connected with Hinduism, have been studied. The fourth chapter treats at length with the popularity of Gaṇeśa as the bestower of success in Buddhism, wherein are noticed in detail the literary references as well as sculptural and pictorial representations of this divinity connected with Buddhism in India, Nepal, Chinese Turkestan and Tibet. In the last four chapters is discussed at length the topic of Gaṇeśa's migration not only in the countries of Farther India and Indonesia but also in the far away lands of China and Japan. In the treatment of these various topics of importance, the learned author has not only taken great pains to incorporate the views of previous scholars, but also has made interesting suggestions of her own.

There is a tendency among many Indologists to regard this elephant-faced, pot-bellied divinity as a late introduction, the reason for this supposition being that there is no reference to him in early Indian literature. R. G. Bhandarkar was of opinion that though the Vināyakas might have become objects of faith before the Christian era, 'the one Gaṇapati-Vinayaka, the son of Ambikā was introduced into the Hindu pantheon much later'. According to him, the Gaṇapati cult must have come into practice between the end of the fifth and the end of the eighth century A.D. Bhandarkar's main argument was based on the absence of any reference to Gaṇapati in any of the Gupta inscriptions. The author also notices this non-mention of Gaṇeśa among the assembly of the Vedic divinities and remarks on the authority of Bhandarkar that the earliest literary reference to this type is to be found in the opening stanzas of Bhavabhūti's *Mālātī-Mādhava* where he is described as having the face of an elephant. But if we refer to the

various synonyms of this divinity in the lexicon *Amarakoṣa* which has been dated by many scholars in the 6th century A.D., we find that the couplet containing the various nomenclatures of Gaṇeśa gives us a clear idea of his iconographic features ( *Vināyake viḡhnaṛāja draimāturaḥ gaṇādhipaḥ/ Apyekadanta heramba lambodara Gaṇānanaḥ* ). Again, the last verse ( No. 58 ) in the chapter on *Pratimālakṣaṇam* of the *Bṛhat saṃhitā* gives us a characteristic description of an image of Gaṇeśa in this manner : *Pramathādhīpa gajamukha pralamba jatharaḥ Kūṭhāradhāri syāt, etc.* It is true that this verse is suspect on account of its absence from most of the manuscript copies of *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* consulted by Prof. Kern, who first edited the text. But this alone would not justify us in discarding the evidence of this interesting verse. Besides, the author herself refers to a passage in the *Taittirīya-āraṇyaka*, which contains a mystic prayer to a god 'Dantin' who is described as *vakratuṇḍa*, one of the characteristic epithets of Gaṇeśa. The particular passage no doubt occurs in the *Khila* of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* and thus would be given a much later date than the period of the bulk of the earlier *Āraṇyaka* literature, still it will rank as one of the earlier texts—certainly much earlier than the particular passage in Bhavabhūti's *Mālatīmādhava*, dealing with this particular divinity. It is a fact that the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* do not make any prominent mention of Gaṇapati, the reference to Gaṇeśa having served as the amanuensis of Vyāsa in the northern recension of the Great Epic being rightly regarded as a late interpolation. But this would not prove that this particular god was unknown when these epics were compiled in their present form. It seems that this usual omission of any allusion to this divinity in earlier epic texts was more or less wilful. That he does not figure in the epic pantheon of deities cannot be explained away by saying that he 'seems only to have been known to the uneducated classes up to the sixth century.' It is almost certain that he was known to the educated and orthodox community who were at first unwilling to recognise him. But that this recognition had already taken place long before the 6th century A.D. is quite evident from his appearance not only in the texts of the same period, but also in the temple architecture of the same, if not earlier, period. This tardy recognition was most probably due to his having originally been one of the gods of the Śūdras ( cf. the reference given by the author to the *Manusamhitā* : but when recognition did come, it appeared with such a thoroughness as to have the place of this god registered in the fore-front of the worship of the 5 sectarian divinities ( cf. The *Pujā mantra* : *Gaṇeśādi pañca devatābhyo namaḥ* ). This importance was of course much due to his being conceived as the bestower of success in every undertaking. Various Purāṇic versions about the origin of this peculiarly conceived divinity clearly indicate the conscious



attempts on the part of the Brahmanical myth-makers to bring him in line with the members of the orthodox pantheon.

The author has discussed at length the appearance of Gaṇeśa in Brahmanical art. She has correctly referred to the figure on a unique copper coin of Huvishka in the Indian Museum, which is described by the die-engraver as Gaṇeśa. (curiously enough the only Brāhmi legend on the Kushan series of coins). But it has been very plausibly observed by her that the image on the coin is that of Śiva, one of whose epithets was Gaṇeśa or Gaṇeśāna : still it does not illustrate Przyluski's theory that 'Śiva and Gaṇeśa were originally the same deity.' Reference in this connection should be made to the author's theory ( p. 13 ) about the latter being rather a derivative than an original deity. Her suggestion that Gaṇeśa might have been derived from the Bhairava form of Śiva is no doubt interesting, but it lacks authoritativeness. Still, it must be observed that a great deal of Śivite characteristics were later incorporated into the developed conception of this deity.

As regards the author's discussion about the appearance of Gaṇeśa in composite reliefs, one or two points should be raised. The smallness of the size of this deity depicted in company of Hara and Pārvatī in various reliefs may simply be due to the artist's naive way of showing a little child accompanying his parents ; whereas the sameness of his size with that of the *matrkās* in the *Sapta matrīkā* reliefs can be explained by saying that he appears there in the role of a guardian deity. The author ( p. 29 ) refers to the relief of Umā ( Pārvatī ) in the Laṅkeśvara of the Kailāsa grotto temple ( Elura ), where the *devī* is shown standing between two fires, holding in her upper hands a small statue of Gaṇeśa and the Śiva līṅga ; a crocodile ( ? ) is shown on the base of the relief. Now, of the six different varieties of Guṇī, viz. Umā, Pārvatī, Śrī, Rambhā, Totalā and Tripurā, the No. 2 variety is described by the author of the *Rūpamaṇḍana*, thus : *Akṣasūtram Śivam devam Gaṇādhyakṣam Kamaṇḍalum / Pakṣadvaye'gnikuṇḍe ca murtissā Pārvatī smṛtā* // It thus appears that the Laṅkeśvara relief stands for an image of Pārvatī and what is described as a crocodile underneath the feet of the goddess is really an *igvāna* ( *godhikā* ) which is the mount of the Śrī variety of the image described just after Pārvatī in the same text in this manner : *Akṣasūtram tathā padmamabhayaṁ ca varam tathā / Godhāsanāśritā mūrtigrhe puṣpā śrīye sadā* // Moreover, this type of Gaṇeśa-bearing image is certainly not unique of its kind, as the author supposes ; there are many such reliefs, especially belonging to the eastern school of sculpture in the collection of various museums such as Calcutta, Rajshahi, etc.

The author says that the Dhanuka Gaṇeśa shows Mahāyāna Buddhist

influence which she finds in the figure's left leg bent before him on the *padmāsana* represented as in Mahāyāna Buddhist images with the last row of lotus petals turned downward ; but she adds that the figure is Hindu in style. It will be better to observe that the characteristic sitting posture of the Dhanuka figure is one of the features common to various images belonging to different sectaries—and these peculiarities were so many conventions adopted by the artists as occasion demanded. In this way much of the suggested Buddhist traits in the Burmese figures of Gaṇeśa noticed by the author can be explained away.

The only feminine form of Gaṇeśa known to the author in India is the figure of Gaṇeśānī, one of the sixty-four *yoginī* figures in the surrounding circular arcade of the Gauri Śāṅkara temple at Bheraghat near Jubbulpur. There is a figure of Gaṇeśānī in bay no. 13 of the Gupta gallery of the Indian Museum, Calcutta ( no. 3919 ). Seated in *padmāsana*, it holds in her upper hands vase and *paraśu* and in her lower hands staff and *moṛaka*, and has in each of her elephantine ear a *śaṅkha-kunḍala* ; its trunk hangs straight for some length and then curls towards the right ( coarse black stone ; from Bihar ; date, c. 9th century A.D. ). In another of the bays of the Gupta Gallery ( no. 17 ) in the same museum, we find an eight-handed bull-faced goddess who holds in her front left hand a two-handed Gaṇeśa ; beneath her seat is a four-handed Gaṇeśānī seated in the *sukhāsana* pose. There are many attendant figures ; an inscription on the pedestal in well-formed characters of the 10th or the 11th century A.D. reads *Śrī Vṛṣabhā* (no. 6494).

It will be impossible to take note of all the special features of the volume in the short space of this review. One, however, can not fail to be impressed by the high standard of scholarship shown by the author in the treatment of her subject. Few are the facts connected with the subject, which have been left unnoticed by her ; and she has handled all these multifarious materials with consummate skill. Her method is critical and her judgments are well balanced.

The Clarendon Press, Oxford, have maintained their reputation in the perfect get-up of the volume. The numerous plates which enrich it are, with few or no exceptions, excellent.

Jitendranath Banerjee,  
Calcutta University.

SOCIOLOGY : A brief outline. By Kewal Motwani, M. A., Ph. D.  
Ganesh & Co. 1937.

DR. Motwani is to be congratulated for presenting the reading public with this thought-provoking booklet on a subject the importance of which is, as yet,

appreciated by very few in this country. His criticism on the inadequacy of Behaviourism as an explanation of human nature is tempting, but his suggestion of incorporating the "Soul" or the "Real man" in the study of sociology appears to be yet shrouded in vagueness and, from the strictly scientific standpoint, I cannot help looking at it with sceptical eyes ( that in spite of my emotional Eastern bias for the "Soul" ). It is hoped that he will develop his ideas in a later work and I take this booklet only as an earnest for greater things to come in future.

K. P. Mukherjee, Ph.D.

NO-MAN'S-LAND : Five articles reprinted from *The Aryan Path*,  
Feb.-June, 1937. 51, Esplanade Road, Bombay. pp. 91 : Price 8 annas.

TRUTH is No-Man's-Land, for there all frontiers of fetishes are fused into one impersonal unity. And it is towards that land that the modern spirit of intensive inquiry is steadily leading mankind, though the goal may not still be in sight.

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It is a hopeful sign of the times that under the pressure of present-day attitude of doubt in every domain "a fraternity of quest" has become possible. But it will be a power for good only "if there is mutual recognition of the unity of Truth itself and of the existence, even if only in germ, of a universal criterion in every man ; ( for ) that must be nearest to Truth which is common to all" ( p. 17 ).

*No-Man's-Land* is a synthetic statement about the existence of one Wisdom-Religion since the dawn of consciousness. It is thus a banner under which all aspirants to Universal Brotherhood may rally and strengthen one another in helping Mankind to span over the "Self of separateness."

G. M.

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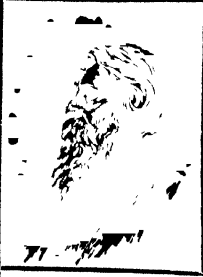
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